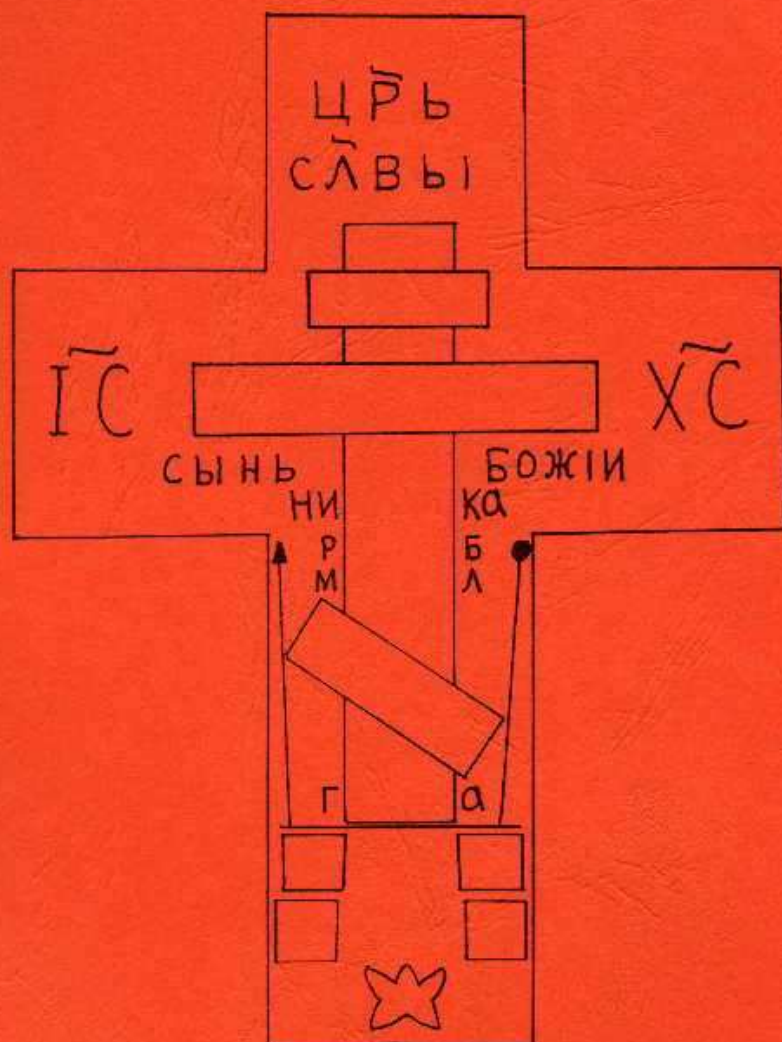


# Freedom For An Old Believer

by Paul John Wigowsky



# **FREEDOM FOR AN OLD BELIEVER**

By Paul John Wigowsky

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Dedicated to the Old Believers

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All names, characters, and events in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real persons which may seem to exist is purely coincidental.

## Chapters = Major Holydays in the Church Calendar

Major Holydays in the Church Calendar		
Holyday	Old (Julian)	New (Gregorian)
1. Birth of Bogoroditsa (Mother of God)	Sept. 8	Sept. 21
2. Exaltation of the Most Holy Cross	Sept. 14	Sept. 27
3. Protection of the Mother of God	Oct. 1	Oct. 14
4. Presentation of the Mother of God	Nov. 21	Dec. 4
5. St. Nicholas the Wonderworker	Dec. 6	Dec. 19
6. The Birth of Hristos (Christ)	Dec. 25	Jan. 7
7. Synod of the Mother of God	Dec. 26	Jan. 8
8. Circumcision of Hristos (Christ)	Jan. 1	Jan. 14
9. The Epiphany (12th day)	Jan. 6	Jan. 19
10. Presentation of Hristos (Christ)	Feb. 2	Feb. 15
11. The Annunciation	Mar. 25	Apr. 7
12. EASTER WEEK (PASKHA)	1ST Sunday after Spring Equinox	
13. Mid-Pentecost Wednesday	25 days after Paskha	
14. Ascension	40 days after Paskha	

15. Descent of the Holy Spirit	50 days after Paskha	
16. Saint John the Theologian	May 8	May 21
17. Transfer of relics of St. Nikola	May 9	May 22
18. Birth of St. John the Baptist	June 24	July 7
19. Saints Peter and Paul	June 29	July 12
20. Transfiguration of Hristos (Christ)	Aug. 6	Aug. 19
21. Assumption of Mother of God	Aug. 15	Aug. 28
22. Beheading of St. John the Baptist	Aug. 29	Sept. 11

## CHAPTER 1 - Birth of Bogoroditsa (Mother of God)

"А ну, Маша/A nu, Masha," (Come on, Masha) ordered the bearded husband to his young and tired-looking wife, Masha. "Let's get everything that we need packed and ready to go. We're leaving this god-forsaken land."

Masha looked up from her sewing work. Her dark blue eyes glanced sideways towards her strong, hard-working husband. Ivan had just come back from the town of Harbin, where he had been for three days, and he had received the good news that the Old Believers had been granted permission to leave the country. China no longer wanted to have anything to do with the Russians. It was the year 1957, and things were changing fast in China, and in the world.

Ivan cast a slanted look into the eastern corner of their small peasant house. The eyes of Saint Nicholas, the adopted patron saint of all Orthodox Russians, stared into the depths of his inner soul. Ivan bowed three times in the direction of the approving saint, and two fingers ran across the front of his body in the sign of the cross. The bows from the waist down and the crossing from the forehead down to the navel and up to the right shoulder and across eye-level to the left shoulder were performed in such a rapid manner that the two acts seemed to be simultaneous.

"Where are you hurrying to?" slowly asked the gray-haired grandfather as he meandered from the kitchen to the living room.

"We're leaving China tomorrow," announced Ivan triumphantly as he finished his obeisances.

"But what country will accept you?" persisted the old man whose gray whiskers and beard made him look like an Old Testament prophet. Iov stopped pacing around the room and looked at his grandson with piercing eyes. His head shook from side to side, and his hands nervously fingered a woolen rosary. In his mind the often repeated prayer, "Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui," (Lord, have mercy) automatically continued while he waited for an answer to his question.

"The people in town are talking about a country named America," answered Ivan.

Masha looked up from her cross-stitching. A red rose design lay in her lap. She was making it for Ivan's new shirt. Something in her mind associated the word America with freedom and lots of riches. She had heard her neighbors talking about a land where people didn't have to work, where money and food was plentiful, and where people lived like kings and queens. She faintly remembered a sweet ringing in her hear when she heard, "A-mari-ka, A-mari-ka."

"And you want to go there and forever give up hope of ever returning to our Родина/Rodina (Motherland)?" questioned Iov.

"What chance is there with the Soviets persecuting us and forcing us to give up our belief?" retorted Ivan. "And what good is it staying here in another communist country, waiting for God knows what?" He turned away without waiting for an answer.

Ivan's face turned red with anger when he said the word "communist." He despised everything associated with that word. To him it meant anti-God, anti-man, anti-morality, anti-everything-that-was-important-for-man's-salvation-on-earth. He had lost his father during a Soviet raid on the village. That ordeal was firmly etched in his mind. His mind flashed back to the days before the big war, World War II, when he was just 10 years old.

He recalled a day in autumn when his father, Makar, took him on his first hunting trip. He had helped his dad skin an elk on that day. He could still feel the blood freezing inside his body and his face turning pale when he saw the bleeding elk. But he quickly recovered from shock when his dad taught him how to hang the elk between two strong limbs and skin it from the top down. After that day, when he was initiated into the life of a hunter, he joyfully awaited the days when his dad would take him hunting for elk, squirrel and various birds. He didn't enjoy eating the squirrel, though. He also remembered that his dad would never take him on any

trips that involved hunting for tigers or bears for the zoo. His dad thought it was too dangerous for him.

A tear formed in Ivan's left eye as his mind skipped to the next scene with his dad. He remembered crying bitterly on that cold winter day. The Soviet troops were helping the Chinese fight the Japanese at that time, and his father Makar was taken by the Soviets and marched off to work on repairing and extending a railway system, which was important for supplying troops at the front. The Soviets drove up one day in jeeps and trucks; they raided the villagers of all the food they could get their hands on; then they forced several able-bodied men into their trucks at gunpoint. Ivan remembered crying and running after the truck, calling out "Тятя, Тятя/Тятя, Tyatya" (Papa, Papa).

Ivan hid his tear-stained face from his wife's eyes. He didn't want to be seen crying like a baby. His dad never returned after that fateful day. The last they heard of Makar was that he was shot by a Soviet soldier for trying to run away from the railroad during a battle between Soviet and Japanese troops. The soldier on guard duty told the men to keep working on the railroad even though the battle was raging all around them. The men had refused and began running for cover since they were not equipped with weapons. The strict Soviet soldier shot several men. The rest escaped. Makar was one of the men who were shot in cold blood.

"What kind of future will you have in America?" muttered Iov. Ivan was no longer listening to his grandfather; he was too wrapped up with his own thoughts. Iov continued talking as he stared out the window onto their small plot of farmland. "Think how hard it will be," he continued. "You won't understand the language. It will be hard finding a good job to support the family. Your wife is due to deliver a baby soon. It won't be easy, you know. You don't know how hard it will be to keep the faith in a strange land. There's a possibility that you'll be separated from each other and scattered all over the world. That's what happened to us

when we began to run away from Russian soil during the Revolution. I'm too old to be running any more."

Iov sank down into an old sofa-chair and sighed. He had seen three generations go by. He had witnessed the collapse of Imperial Russia. He had land taken away from him. He was forced by circumstances to follow a small group of Old Believers from the maritime province of Russia near the Sea of Japan into the province of Manchuria in China. The wrinkles on his face were like the rings of a tree: each displayed a period of time and also a period of growth. The time of troubles that he had lived through were sculptured into the wrinkles on his face. It was as if for every trouble or sorrow that he went through another wrinkle was added to his face to wear. They were the rewards or medals that Mother Nature gave him for each cycle in the life of man that he had completed.

Masha had been sitting all this time and listening with apprehension while Iov talked about the future. Her ears had perked up and she felt a sharp jab and kick when he mentioned the fact that she would deliver any day now. She had asked her Godmother, Yuliana Lazarevskaya, to act as midwife together with the village midwife. Now she wasn't sure what would happen. A surge of panic raced through her stomach and got caught in her throat as she began to rise to her feet. She had to grip the chair with her left hand as she stood to her feet.

"Do you want something to eat?" asked Masha as she wobbled from side to side towards the kitchen. She tried not to think about her own problems. She always felt, and had been taught by her mother, that her first duty was to her husband, then to her children. Masha was the only child and her mother took special care to indoctrinate her in all the ways of a pure and respectable girl who would be obedient and subservient to her parents and, later in life, true and faithful to her husband. In such a way, she was taught, she would be looked upon by God and by people as a virtuous woman worthy of a good husband and a good life.



"I'll just have a piece of bread and sausage," answered Ivan. "We've got to hurry and get our clothes and essentials packed. Then I've got to run over to Andrey Ribrov's."

"Don't forget to come back before sundown," called Iov. "We've got to go to the моле́льня/molelnya (church) tonight. It's the Eve of the birth of the Богородица/Bogoroditsa (Mother of God.)."

Ivan was ashamed of himself. He was so excited about leaving China and going to a new land that he had completely forgotten about observing the religious holyday of the birth of the Mother of God. It was one of the twelve great feasts of their church calendar. September the 8th was also the first major holyday on the church calendar, which began with September the 1st.

Masha placed the plate of food on the table. The piece of bread was just cut from the fresh loaf of Russian bread that she had baked in the morning. The cold homemade sausage was cut into small round pieces and placed beside the bread. Ivan sat down, crossed himself, and recited the Lord's Prayer in a rapid manner before partaking of the food. Masha did the same together with her husband.

"You will need to pack mostly the clothes," began Ivan as he took a bite of the soft white bread. "And don't forget to pack my holy books and our ikons. Those are our most precious treasures. The man at the consulate told me I won't be able to take my hunting rifle with me. That's what I want to see Andrey Ribrov about. He says there's a Chinaman who'll pay good money for it."

"You should give up that hunting business completely," chimed in Iov, who had awakened from his reverie. "We've lost many of our best young men because of hunting accidents." He was referring especially to the latest accident that Ivan himself had told his grandfather about. It happened to an impetuous young hunter named Simeon who wasn't aware of a hunter behind him when he stood up from behind the bushes to shoot an elk. The hunter, Nikita, swore to give up hunting and to confess his sins daily as he cried over the

body of the twenty-two year old Simeon that he had shot accidentally.

"I've always told you," continued Iov, "that if a man lives by the sword, he'll die by the sword. That's what our Scriptures tell us."

"I know, I know," replied Ivan. "But a man has to make a living somehow. And a man has to get food for the table somehow, too. That's his sacred duty and responsibility to God and to his family."

"Yes, but there are other means of making a living," concluded Iov. He said no more.

Masha sat quietly and listened. She reminisced about that hunting accident. It was the last week in March, and she had begged Ivan to stay home. She sensed that something tragic was going to happen. She remembered the foreboding dream that woke her up before the sun rose. She had seen a dead man lying in a coffin. She told Ivan about the dream, but Ivan reassured her in a manly, fearless way that there was nothing to fear. Ivan was the third man in that party. When Ivan returned from the hunting trip and told her about the death of Simeon and the unfortunate incident, she broke down and cried for several hours. She felt it was partly her fault that the others had gone hunting without her warning them.

But then the mood of Masha's internal soul changed as she reflected on how Ivan had loved her after the week-long absence. She knew that was the day when her baby was conceived. Masha could still hear the angelic words that her husband spoke to her as he lay by her side that night.

"For every death there is a birth," he had said. "The child that you'll have will be a replacement--a soul for a soul."

Those words were like an electrical charge that pierced her womb like a flaming arrow and gave her a new life. Peace came over her soul.

Two months after that climactic period in her life, Masha was positive that she would be blessed with the arrival of a baby. She would be a mother, finally. Her purpose and function in life as a woman would be fulfilled. Masha felt

her heart open up like a rose, and love poured out in ever-widening circles to the expectant baby.

Presently she was approximately seven months into her pregnancy, and the date of arrival was expected to be sometime before the third week in December.

"Will you be able to take down the embroidered sheets around the ikons before you go to Andrey's?" asked Masha, turning her attention back to her husband and to their immediate needs. "I'll need to pack those separately with our ikons."

"Yes, of course," answered Ivan, remembering that his wife was pregnant and unable to stand on chairs in fear of falling down and losing the baby. Ivan felt a compassionate warmth flow through his body for the woman who was going to bear his baby. He leaned over to his right and kissed the mother-to-be on the lips. Masha responded by throwing her arms around his neck and embracing him.

"Hurry home so we can finish packing together," Masha said in between kisses.

"Of course, my dear little голубка/golubka (love-dove), responded Ivan affectionately. He always referred to his wife as his dear love-dove whenever he felt passion rise in him.

Ivan quickly stifled his feelings and said a quick prayer; then he stood up and crossed himself before leaving the old wooden table. He went through the two small bedrooms and the living room and took down the religiously significant sheets, which were embroidered with flowers. He grabbed his hunting rifle and opened the door of the hut, which now belonged to the Chinese and which was the only piece of property that was left for them to use while they still lived in China. He walked half a mile down the dirt road to Andrey's house. The land beside the road used to belong to Ivan before the Communist Chinese came in the name of land reform and took the land for their own use. Ivan glanced over the once fertile wheat land and felt remorse and grief at what the Chinese revolutionary cadres had done without warning in 1949 in their area. Not only had they left them without a source of income, but they had humiliated them

and had taken away their human dignity. The Old Believers were tillers of the soil. Without the mother earth to rely on, they were left like orphans--left to fend for themselves as best as they could.

These and other thoughts crowded their way into Ivan's mind as he walked to meet with his friend, Andrey Ribrov.

Ivan knocked on the door of Andrey's small farm house. When the door opened, Ivan walked in and bowed toward the eastern corner where the ikons were displayed on the wall. He muttered a fast short prayer to himself.

"Боже милости будь меня грешного создав меня Господи, помилуй меня без числа согрешив, Господи помилуй и прости меня грешного/Bozhe milosti bud' menya greshnego sozdav menya Gospodi, pomiluy menya bez chisla sogreshiv, Gospodi pomiluy e prosti menya greshnego," he prayed.

As he ended the silent prayer -- "God be merciful to me a sinner my creator and Lord, have mercy on me who has sinned without number, Lord be merciful and forgive me a sinner" -- he yelled out, "Здоров Живёшь/Zdorov Zhivyosh!"

The greeting, "Live in Good Health!" was accepted and returned with a response greeting by Andrey.

"Милости просим/Milosti prosim," (We ask for mercy) responded Andrey.

After mutual respect and bowing toward each other was exchanged, Ivan handed the rifle to Andrey.

"Will you be able to get the money from the Chinaman before noon tomorrow?" asked Ivan. He stood with his arms crossed against his chest.

"Sure," replied Andrey as he invited Ivan with a gesture of his outspread hand to sit down at the table with him. "I'll be riding in to town early in the morning to sell some squirrel skins that I trapped yesterday."

Andrey was a good businessman, and he got along considerably better with the Chinese than his fellow Old Believers. He had gone to a provincial school and had learned enough Chinese when he was young to be able to

communicate with the natives, especially in business matters. He helped many of his fellow-believers in most business transactions with the Chinese. Because of his good standing with the local leaders, he was allowed a small plot of land to call his own and to grow wheat on. He felt it was a reward from God for all of his charitable deeds.

"I hear you won't be coming with us to Hong Kong on the first train load," inquisitively remarked Ivan.

"That's true," admitted Andrey. "I've got to settle matters with this изба/izba (hut) and plot of land. I hope to sell it to the highest bidder in town. It might take me a while to get the money though, so I'll have to wait until I do. And then I have to attend the funeral of that fool, Stefan Durakov. Did you hear that he went and got himself killed yesterday (Thursday) by a tiger?"

"No, I didn't hear about it," replied Ivan with a puzzled look on his face. "I was in town all day making arrangements for the trip to Hong Kong. I was with an English representative from the World Council of Churches. What happened?"

"Alyosha told me that he, Yasha and young Stefan had gone three days after our church new year to stalk and capture a tiger for the Chinese zoo," said Andrey. The church new year that he referred to began on September the 1st. "According to Alyosha, Stefan decided to start out early in the morning on the third day. They had already searched for two days without spotting a tiger. The cautious and fearful Stefan had begun to think that they would never see a tiger, so he decided to walk along the creek a little ways and report back. The other two, more experienced, hunters warned him not to go alone, but Stefan wanted to show that he was no longer afraid."

Andrey stopped talking for a moment. He was trying to recollect what Alyosha had told him next.

"A ha," continued Andrey after the slight pause, remembering what transpired next. "Of course, Alyosha and Yasha weren't going to let anything happen to the young eighteen-year-old kid, so they hurried after him. That's when

they heard a loud scream, "Ee Ah!" And then the cries for help were intensified as Stefan fought for his life. When Alyosha and Yasha came upon the scene with their fierce cries to frighten away the tiger in order to save Stefan from further harm, it was too late. The tiger's claws had torn through Stefan's neck and had opened up his jugular vein. Two sharp teeth had pierced through the chest and had punctured the heart."

"О Боже мой/O, Bozhe moy," (O, my God) exclaimed Ivan, as the muscles on his face twitched at the thought of the bleeding heart.

"The tiger ran away with her two little cubs trailing behind her when she saw Alyosha and Yasha," proceeded Andrey without noticing the convulsions that were shaking Ivan's inner being. "Stefan had lost consciousness. Blood oozed out from his pierced heart and squirted from his torn jugular vein in rhythmic pulsations. Alyosha tried to stop the bleeding with his fingers, but it was to no avail. Yasha prayed over him with his "Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui" (Lord, have mercy) prayer, but Stefan's soul was already soaring up into heaven like a bird who had been freed from a cage."

"That's sad, very sad," said Ivan reflectively.

"It was his first tiger-hunting trip," admitted Andrey sorrowfully. "He told us he wanted to help his parents and make some big money. You know yourself that a tiger is worth a substantial amount of money, especially if it's captured alive. The reward is well worth the effort even though there is a risk of losing one's own life. But if he would have listened and stuck together with his partners, he would still be alive. His partners caught many tigers before, and they only suffered minor injuries because they respected the power of the tiger. Well, Stefan was young and inexperienced. Alyosha told me that he was going to break the young hunter in and teach him the ropes, but he just got too anxious. The hard part for Alyosha was when he brought the body home. Alyosha and Yasha had washed Stefan's body by the creek after the blood had completely coagulated,

and they had wrapped him up in his sleeping bag. Alyosha told Stefan's parents that he had put up a good fight, and they briefly mentioned that he had insisted on going alone without waiting for them. 'God, in his Heavenly Wisdom, knows why my boy had to go,' was all the father said as he mourned over his son's body. The mother only kept repeating, ' Господи помилуй, Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui, Gospodi Pomilui' (Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy), as she crossed herself over and over."

"He could have been going to Hong Kong with the rest of us tomorrow," remarked Ivan.

"That's right," said Andrey. "As it is, his bones will rest in the red dirt of China. He'll be buried the day after tomorrow alongside his friends at our church cemetery. His father, on top of it all, has to build the box in which his own son will be laid."

"They'll probably have to wait for the next train load out to Hong Kong," added Ivan.

"The parents told me just the close relatives and his Хрёстная/Hrostownaya (Godmother) will stay for the funeral," informed Andrey.

When Ivan finally excused himself from the talkative Andrey Ribrov, the sun was beginning to set and the sky was aglow with red, orange, and pink colors. The rays of the setting sun spread out in all directions from behind scattered clouds.

"Well, good-bye, my dear friend," exclaimed Andrey as they parted on the steps of the back porch. "Go with God, and remember us in your prayers. Hopefully, next year we'll be free from our cares here and make our way in search of hospitable land."

"Keep the old belief," responded Ivan. They embraced in the Russian fashion, arms flung around the back and shoulders, and then they bowed respectfully and religiously to each other as a sign of their mutual belief.

"Till we meet again, Ioann Bogolubov," cried Andrey as Ivan began walking down the path back home.

Ivan turned and waved at the mention of his religious name Ioann. A warm smile beamed back at his boyhood friend, who had always called him Ioann whenever he wanted to stress the religious nature of the boy who was raised by Grandfather Iov to read holy books in church. At the age of eight, Ivan was already reading the Psalter during the church service. He had spiritual pride in that prominent position, for when he stood and read the words of wisdom that King David had left for all generations, he felt a flowing grace embrace his entire body and soul. People sensed his contact with something divine, and they remarked to one another that here was a boy chosen to bring God's Grace to men through the reading of the Holy Word.

By the time Ivan reached his humble little hut, the first stars and planets in the sky had become visible. Venus, the bright "evening star," sparkled in blue-green colors as Ivan entered through the door.

"Try this рубаха/rubaha (shirt) on," said Masha as she slowly rose to meet her husband. "I finished it for you while you were gone."

Ivan took the colorful violet shirt in his hands, inspected it, and put it on. Three large roses adorned the front panel of the shirt down the middle of the chest and nine small roses circled around the collar which covered his neck. Green vines with leaves connected the roses.

"You can wear it under your халат/halat (robe) tonight when you go to the моле́нья/molelnya (church)," continued Masha as she admired the way her husband looked in the bright, new shirt.

"It fits nicely," remarked Ivan, "and it's really beautiful." Ivan came closer to Masha and kissed her on the cheek as a sign of gratitude for all the long hours spent on sewing just one shirt for him.

"Get yourself ready," chimed in Grandfather Iov as he walked out of his tiny bedroom in his long black monk's robe. "It's time to begin the service for our most venerable Дева/Deva (Virgin), the Богородица/Bogoroditsa (Mother of God)."



Iov was the настоятель/nastoyatel' (superior elder) of the small community church, and it was his duty to open the door and light the candles in preparation for the service.

"We'll be ready in a minute," responded Ivan and Masha in unison.

"Hurry, we can't be late," urgently insisted the punctual настоятель/nastoyatel' (elder) as he began to go out the door.

"You go ahead, and we'll catch up with you," said Ivan as he bowed his head into the kitchen sink. "I have to wash up a bit before I go."

Iov slowly trudged down the dirt road to the village church, which was another mile past Andrey's house. He had served his people for thirty years now in the village church near Harbin. He walked with his head bent low, and he contemplated his past history. He reflected on the innocent pre-revolutionary years when he lived near Khabarovsk in a similar village of Old Believers. Those were the years of plenty and prosperity, when war and famine were unheard of except as rumors. By the turn of the century he was already thirty years old, and he had a family of his own. When the first rumblings of Russian revolution were heard in 1905, everyone in the village thought that the end of the world was near. He could still hear the sounds of cannons, guns, and horses' hooves that ravaged the Russian land and made Russian people flee in every imaginable direction for safety and shelter. He recalled the land grabbing of the Bolsheviks and the portraits of Lenin in the streets of Khabarovsk. Iov bitterly fought back the tears of nostalgia for his mother country as he remembered how hard it was to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Persecution for the Old Belief wasn't half as bad in Russia as humiliation and total alienation had been in China. In Russia he felt at home; in China he was a stranger.

It was totally dark by the time Iov reached the small molelnya (church), which had been built by Iov and his fellow Old Believers as a home and was later converted into a church. He fumbled for his key in his pants' pocket, and he

crossed himself and bowed three times before stepping up a step to insert the brass key into the green front door. The light of the moon gave him enough light to see where to step and where to insert the key, but once inside the door he had to step cautiously in the darkness and feel his way along the wall in order to turn on the light. He went about his duty of lighting the candles in front of the ikons, which were located at the eastern end of the rectangular building. The simple green building was beautifully decorated on the inside with hand-sewn curtains above the doors, around the windows, and along the side walls. The most adorable section belonged to the centrally-located row of ikons with candles lit in front of them in their honor. At the center of the long row of gold-tinted ikons hung a large image of the Богородица /Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) with the Christ-child. On the wall above the ikons hung a long white linen cloth with seven Russian Orthodox crosses strung from left to right; the seven crosses signified that the Old Believers carried on the tradition and teachings of the Seven General Councils, which convened periodically from 325 AD to 787 AD to establish the basic tenets of Christianity.

By the time Iov had finished lighting the entire row of candles, Ivan and Masha had arrived at the church. It took them longer to walk now that Masha was with child. Other worshippers continued to enter the hall-like building. As they entered they made their three obligatory bows of obeisance and crossing with two fingers. Each participant in the ritual concluded the preparatory rites by bowing once to the right, once to the left, and once to the center before moving to their chosen spot to stand in. A choral group was assembling at the front part of the hall to chant the sacred liturgy, while a group of women assembled toward the back and a group of men assembled toward the front. The men were dressed in black monk robes; the women wore their brightly-colored flowery dresses and scarves with fringes. The children stood beside their parents with their arms crossed and imitated them in every detail of the sacred ritual.

The first part of the liturgy to the Mother of God was chanted at dusk. Mention was made in the liturgy of the holy parents of Mary--Ioakim and Anna. They were placed by God in a position to bring blessing and mercy to the human race. They had consecrated their life for the fulfillment of God's promise to bring a Blessed Дева/Deva (Virgin) who would conceive and bear a Savior.

The second part of the liturgy to the Mother of God was chanted several hours after midnight, when the worshippers gathered again to celebrate the great day when the eternal tabernacle and temple was created by the merciful hand of God in preparation for the heavenly bridegroom. "Blessed art thou among women," chanted the worshippers as they rejoiced at the thought of the Mother of God interceding for them and nourishing them. The joy was to be universal, for from her would shine the sun of righteousness, Christ the Lord, who would defeat death and darkness and grant unto the worshippers eternal life. The birth of the Mother of God was to free the original parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, from the chains of sin and death.

As dawn approached, the heavy substance of darkness changed colors as the sun began to make its appearance. The worshippers, who had commemorated and personalized the mysterious birth of the Mother of God through whom the equally mysterious union of the divine Word with human nature had been accomplished, now scattered somberly and fervently to their own homes. The night vigil was part of the sacred tradition that the Russians had inherited from the monastic tradition of the Holy Byzantine Empire. Time seemed to stand still when the eternal liturgy was celebrated. It was a world within a world, a sacred world of monastic worshippers within the secular, business-like world of ordinary men.

As the sun lifted its head over the eastern horizon to signal the beginning of a new day, Ivan and Masha walked hand in hand to their little hut with hurried steps. Ivan anticipated a better future in a better world, and Masha

expected a better home for the child who was anxiously stirring within her womb.

## CHAPTER 2 - "Exaltation of the Most Holy Cross"

It was Sunday and business went on as usual in the Chinese Communist world. People bought, sold, traded, and took care of business like on any other day of the week. Andrey went early in the morning to sell the rifle to the Chinaman in order to get some money for Ivan. Stefan Durakov was laid in a coffin in preparation for the funeral service at the church cemetery. Ivan and Masha slept after the night church service. They woke up at noon when Andrey had already returned from town with the money. He had left the money with the grandfather when he was told that his friend was still sleeping.

"Tell Ivan I'll try to make it to the train station tonight when the train is scheduled to depart for Hong Kong," instructed Andrey.

Andrey was in his wagon and whipping his horse into motion before Ivan could get out of bed. Ivan heard the commotion at the front door, but he had a hard time opening his tired eyes. He always felt this way after a long night service.

"What did Andrey say?" asked Ivan as he rubbed the sleep away from his eyes with his knuckles. He stopped three feet away from his grandfather and waited impatiently for an answer.

"He told me to give this money to you," said Iov, handing a small roll of money into Ivan's outstretched left hand. Iov stroked his long gray beard as he tried to remember what else he was expected to relay. Then he felt a tingle in his brain, and a picture of Andrey flashed into his mind. Instantly he heard the words, "Tell Ivan I'll try to make it to the train station."

"And there's something else," muttered Iov as his eyes sparkled with the joy of remembering. "Andrey said he'll try to see you at the train station one last time before you leave for Hong Kong." Iov didn't mention anything about the Soviet agitators that were in town. Andrey had briefly remarked about their presence in Harbin.

Ivan went back to his room, folded the money carefully into his wallet, and then said his prayers. Masha began to stir as Ivan rapidly and meticulously made his obeisances and crossings. He muttered the Lord's Prayer and then he finished off with another short petition for the Lord "not to be angered at me a sinner and a lazy servant." He emphasized the closing words, "and enlighten the eyes of my heart to learn of your word and to understand your commandments and to do your will and to sing unto thee with an open heart." Masha whispered the words, "And to praise your holy and All-Mighty name, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen."

Masha bowed three times to the floor beside her husband, and then she crossed herself in the act of finalizing the morning prayer. She fought back a tear as she imagined what a hard road lay ahead of them. She struggled to her feet under the weight of the child in her womb and under the burden of the overpowering depression that suddenly seized her heart.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Ivan, grabbing Masha by the arm as she started to falter and lose her footing.

"I don't know," responded Masha, as she reposed in Ivan's arms. "I felt a little faint and sorrowful."

"You should feel happy," encouraged Ivan. "We have a bright future ahead of us."

"I know," replied Masha. "But I was thinking of the uncertainty that lies ahead. What if we don't make it to America? What if we're tricked into going to some other country? What kind of work will you do? And how will we live?"

"My dear Mashenka," reprimanded Ivan, using an endearing form of her name. "Our lives are in the hands of God. He led our parents thus far, and now He'll lead us to the Promised Land. I have no doubts that we'll live some day soon in America. Don't worry about it. We'll make it all right."

Ivan put his reassuring arm around Masha's shoulder and caressed her cheeks. He kissed her tears away and reassured her with affectionate words that everything would work out for good for them.

The warm tender moment was interrupted by a rare occurrence in the countryside--the jarring sound of a whining Army jeep. Ivan quickly ran to the front door to see what on earth was entering their private domain. Iov glanced over Ivan's shoulder as the Soviet jeep thundered and skidded to a dusty halt outside their gravel walkway. Two men in brown uniforms stepped out of the two-seat jeep and briskly walked up to the door.

"Товарищи/Tovarishchi," (comrades) said the older of the two men as he smiled in an awkward way. His face was red from excessive drinking and his hands were stained with cigarette tar and nicotine. A thin scar from a knife wound decorated the left side of his throat. He addressed all people with the over-used Soviet term "comrade."

"Что вам надо/Shto vam nada?" (What do you want?) asked Ivan as he took a defensive position with arms folded across his chest.

"We heard that the Westerners have enticed the Chinese to let some of you go abroad," began the older man, who happened to be a sergeant. "Our Soviet consulate in China is concerned about its Russian citizens and wishes to extend a warm welcome back to the Fatherland for all who wish to return."

"We have no such desire," bluntly stated Ivan. He was ready to close the door when the other man stepped forward with an outstretched right hand.

"Пожалуйста подожди-ка минутку / Pozhaluysta pogozhdyi-ka minutku," (Please wait a minute) politely requested the younger man in his starched uniform. Ivan stopped and looked at the young man who was decorated with several distinguished-looking metals. His youthful face and high-class mannerisms were a complete contrast to his low-breeding, burly companion. A shiny medal emblazoned with the words "The Order of Lenin" caught Ivan's eyes.

"Hear me out," began the young officer. "We have begun a new program in Russia."

He had been trained to use the word Russia instead of Soviet Union when talking to non-Soviets. The words "new program" enticed even Iov to perk up his ears. He edged his way past Ivan and made his peasant appearance plainly visible to the young lieutenant.

"This new program consists of giving land back to the people and bringing all the Russians back to their own soil," continued the young lieutenant, who was experienced in the art of persuasion through positive propaganda. "There is a bright future for Russia, and we wish to unite all the Russians behind the slogan 'Peace to All the World.' Russia is now rising to its highest potential, and within a month it will take its place as the boldest and most adventurous nation on earth. Russia plans to reach for the stars and point the way to the cosmos for all humanity. I cannot disclose all the facts to you, but I can promise you one thing."

"What's that?" asked Iov as he stepped down from the threshold of the door to the ground below. The young lieutenant looked the old man straight in the eye.

"Things in Russia have changed for the better," announced the young lieutenant with a smile. "Even the churches are opening their doors again, and people are permitted to gather and worship their god. The days of persecution are over."

Iov couldn't believe his ears. Could this be true?

"You're lying!" exclaimed Ivan. Ivan stared at the clean-shaven young lieutenant. Ivan saw a man who spoke Russian and yet belied the traditional mold of a bearded Russian (an image that Ivan had formed in his own mind as to what was real and orthodox in contrast to what was false and ungodly).

"Wait a minute!" chimed in Iov in his squeaky old voice. "There might be some truth to what he's saying."

"There's no truth in his words at all," roared Ivan. His voice and facial appearance began to resemble a lion intent on swallowing its prey. He pointed his finger at the sergeant who was not sitting comfortably in the driver's seat smoking



a thin-tubed Soviet cigarette. "That man is an animal, and he has the look of a murderer. I would never trust my life in his hands. I've heard he takes our people to Siberia and whips them until they die."

The sergeant sat up at the mention of the word "murderer." He hadn't heard anyone call him that since the Second World War when he stabbed a German in cold blood. That was when he had received the knife wound in his throat. The German had managed to momentarily grab the knife from his hand and strike at his vital life line, but the sergeant overpowered him with a bear hug and cut the German's throat before he could strike again.

"I'll teach you to call me names," bellowed the sergeant as he came storming toward the man who dared confront him. The young lieutenant stood in his way with arms extended at the sides, barring the way for any impetuous attack. The young lieutenant whispered a threat into the sergeant's enraged ears, and the sergeant backed off instantly. He did not want to be reported for insubordination to a higher-ranking officer.

"I'm sorry for his behavior," said the young officer in a cool manner. "He has suffered much during the war, and the scars of memory do not heal at all with such old war horses."

Ivan stood in the doorway, trembling from the thought that he had almost provoked a fight from a veteran warrior. Masha had watched the showdown from the window facing the walkway, and now she came to Ivan's rescue.

"Come inside, Vanya," she pleaded, taking him by the hand and pulling him back to safety. Ivan did not resist. He felt numb and weak, as if his blood had rushed from his head to his feet.

"Старичок/Starichok (old man)," said the young officer, addressing Iov in familiar terms. "You tell that young boy of yours that Russia can use his fighting spirit and his courageous energy. And don't forget, as our saying goes, "Своя земля и в горести мила/Svoya zemlya e v goresti mila (One's own land is dear even in time of affliction)."

"Is it true, young man," interrupted Iov, who was intent on finding a solution to an age old question, "that Russia is really going to lead the world to a better future?"

"That's a fact," replied the young officer proudly.

"And the orthodox faith will be restored to its rightful God-given place?" asked Iov with a starry-eyed look in his eyes.

"Religion will be tolerated," stated the young officer matter-of-factly. "Comrade Khrushchev has assured us of that."

"Then there's still hope for Russia," mused the old man as his eyes gazed into the northwest across the hills to the land which he once called "родина/rodina" (motherland). "If Russia remembers God and recalls her mission in the world as our fathers taught us, then the cross of suffering will fall off her back and she'll stand upright once again in the orthodox faith as she once did before the heretical changes brought ruin and judgment upon the land."

The young officer had no idea what the old man was muttering about. He saw that the old man was simply talking to himself, as if in some reverie or a form of rapture.

"Let's hit the next household," signaled the young officer to his driver. "The old man's rambling like a fool."

The sergeant turned the key in the ignition, and the jeep's motor sputtered and choked momentarily from all the country dust that had gotten into its carburetor. Iov turned and yelled toward the jeep.

"Are there others going back to Russia?" asked Iov.

"What did you say?" yelled back the young officer.

Iov came up to the jeep. "Are there other Russians that are willing to go back to Russia?" he repeated.

"Yes," replied the young officer. "We have several trucks by the consulate in town ready to go back tonight with people assigned to them. We've already shipped a convoy earlier this week. I told you it's a big program, and many of your people would rather go back to Russia than wander upon the face of the earth for the rest of their days."

"I want to go back to my 'родина/rodina' (motherland) again," said Iov. His soul leaped for joy within his heart. All at once he knew that he was coming home again. His journey on earth was over.

"We won't have much use for you, old man," remarked the sergeant bluntly.

"That's all right," interjected the young officer tactfully. "You can still come. Mother Russia will welcome you back in her arms no matter how old you are. Be at the consulate before dark. It's several blocks away from the train station. You'll find it."

The sergeant whizzed back in reverse and then shifted into first gear as he picked up a cloud of dust under the spinning tires. The young lieutenant waved and smiled at Iov, who turned his face away from the blinding dust.

Iov crossed himself and muttered his habitual "Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui" (Lord, have mercy) as he opened the door to the hut. He knew exactly what he had to do. He envisioned the circular path of his pilgrimage, which had started from Russia and was finally returning there again. He touched the wooden cross that hung around his neck on a thick string and muttered a prayer before he approached Ivan.

"My dear grandson, Ioann," began the old patriarch as he approached Ivan. "I want you to sit down for a moment and listen to my last words of instruction to you."

Ivan sensed the seriousness of the moment, for his grandfather used the spiritual name Ioann only during moments of special spiritual instruction. He sat down in a chair facing Iov, who stood before Ivan with trembling hands.

"This cross that I'm about to give to you is a sacred relic that my настоятель/nastoyatel (minister) Avraam gave me before he went to meet his maker." Iov showed Ivan a brown wooden cross about two inches long and one inch wide. There was a worn spot on the bottom of the cross, and the unpainted exterior revealed splinters of a light brown hue making up its substance.

"This precious cross has a long history, and it has always blessed and protected those who respected it and honored it by wearing it around their necks," stated Iov reverently. "The wood is sacred. It was made years ago in Russia from a consecrated tree. The symbols of our faith are inscribed on it. Listen carefully and always remember what I am about to tell you."

Iov came close to Ivan and knelt on his right knee as he showed the face of the cross to Ivan. Ivan bent over slightly and peered at the mystery of the wooden tree-cross. He had seen it before, but now he was being honored by having it in his possession. It was larger than the one inch soft metal cross that he wore around his neck.

"You've heard it said, I'm sure," continued Iov, "That the Latin cross has four extremities and our orthodox cross has eight extremities. Our cross was given to us to safeguard and preserve for all generations so that the complete mystery of God might be revealed in due time. Our cross combines three crosses: the first cross on top has the inscription 'Царь Славы/Tsar Slavi' (King of Glory) over it; the second cross, the longer one going horizontally a little below the smaller top one and parallel with it, has the inscription 'Исус Христос, сын Божий/Iseus Hristos, sin Bozhiy' (Iseus Hristos, Son of God) on the sides; the third cross, a diagonal cross, with the left foot being lower than the raised right foot, has the inscription 'раб Божий, место лобное, глава адамова/rab Bozhiy, mesto lobnoye, glava Adamova' (servant of God, place of the Skull, head of Adam) on the sides, using just the first initials. Connecting the lower cross and standing on the left and right sides are the reed upon which the vinegar in a sponge was given to our Lord to drink and the spear which pierced his side. On the sides of the cross near its middle is the inscription 'ni ka' which means 'Нас искупи кровью адамова/nas iskupi krovyou Adamova' (save us with the blood of Adam). And at the foot of the cross is the head of Adam, which rests in repose under the entire structure of the three crosses. I have heard it said that the cross of Hristos was created from three kinds of wood:

'кипариса, певга, и кедра/kipareesa, pevga, e kedra.' One of our teachers, St. John Chrysostom, however, was of the opinion that the cross was made only of oak."

Ivan puzzled over the words " кипариса, певга, и кедра / kipareesa, pevga, e kedra." He knew the cypress and the cedar trees, but he had never heard of the third tree.

"What kind of tree is pevga?" asked Ivan.

"That is a mystery to me, too," answered Iov. He turned the cross over to its back side and pointed to the one verse inscription. "On this side is the prayer of protection that you say before going to sleep at night. Teach it to your children, and tell them to teach it to their children."

Iov closed his eyes, crossed himself, and recited the prayer by heart: "Да воскреснет Бог, и да разыдутся врази его, и да бежать от лица его ненавидящие его/Да voskresnet Bog, e razidutsya vrazi yeho, e da bezhat ot litsa yeho nenavigyashchiye yeho." ("Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him"). Those were the sacred words from Psalms chapter 68, verse 1 which were inscribed on the small cross.

Ivan joined his grandfather in the continuation of the well-known prayer of protection: "As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before (the face of) the fire, so let the wicked (demons) perish at the presence (the face of) those who love God and make the sign of the cross upon themselves. And let us rejoice saying: Rejoice for the cross of our Lord, which disperses demons with the power of the one who was crucified on it, our Lord Isous Hristos, who descended into hell and defeated the power of the devil and gave us his glorious cross for dispersion of all evil. Oh, most honored and life-giving Cross of our Lord, help me with Our Holy Lady the Mother of God and with all the holy heavenly powers, at all times, now and always and for all ages in eternity. Amen."

Iov and Ivan bowed to the ground and touched their forehead against the floor. After three such obeisances, they stood up and bowed from the waist down toward each other in mutual respect and humiliation. Ivan could no longer hold

back the tears that were longing to burst and roll down the sides of his face.

"Why are you leaving us?" sobbed Ivan, who had by now sensed the imminent separation.

"My pilgrimage on earth is over, my grandson," softly replied Iov as he embraced and comforted Ivan. "I must go back to Mother Russia to lay down my weary bones and rest. I'd rather make the full circle and return to my homeland than to continue suffering in some foreign land. There's a saying: 'С родной земли—умри, не сходи/S rodnoy zemli--oomri, nye skhodi' (Die with your motherland--don't leave it). You have your own destiny to fulfill, so you go on without me. The protection of the Holy Cross will preserve you from all harm. Look to its redeeming power, for it is our connection between heaven and earth."

"But those ungodly Soviets will send you to Siberia to die like an animal," remonstrated Ivan.

"My dear boy," admonished Iov. "There is nowhere on earth that you can hide from the ante-Hrist and his legion of demons that persecute the true believers. His work of evil and ungodliness is spread all over the earth, and only in constant prayer and vigil can you escape his mark on your soul. I believe in Russia even though she has momentarily turned her face away from God. I believe that she is destined to reveal the true orthodox faith in due time. Remember, she is the third kingdom, and a fourth there will never be, as was prophesized by our forefathers. If I have to suffer for the cause and be betrayed by a fellow-Russian, so be it. I am ready to give up the world and my life in order to gain my reward in paradise."

An aura of light beamed around Iov's face as his eyes gazed heavenward. He seemed to be gazing into another world as he spoke, a world of martyrdom for the sake of salvation. He was willing to participate in earthly suffering in imitation of Christ in order to gain a heavenly crown.

"I was hoping to cross into the new land with you," said Ivan with his head bent down. His eyes looked through tears at his grandfather's worn out shoes.

"There's only one land that I want to enter now, my dear boy," said Iov. "Рай/Raiy" (Paradise).

"We'll go into town together," said Ivan, changing the subject.

"Yes, we'll go into town together, and then we'll go our separate ways, you on the waters to a new land and me on dry land back to an old land," said Iov as he stared with foresight into the distant future.

Later Iov instructed Ivan to take the ikons from the molelnya (church) and the tapestry of the seven crosses and pack them in a special suitcase. Ivan was instructed to set them up in the new land to which they would go.

Two hours before dusk, as the sun was beginning its descent to the horizon, Ivan, Masha and Iov climbed into a hired wagon with their belongings wrapped up in small bundles and their special treasures and sacred relics packed in suitcases. They were on their way to Harbin. As they rode past the home of the late Stefan Durakov, they heard a group of old ladies chanting and mourning. Ivan asked the driver to stop for a moment. He wanted to listen for a moment. Through the open window could be heard the repetitious intonations of a familiar prayer:

“СВЯТЫИ БОЖЕ/Svyatiy Bozhe  
СВЯТЫИ КРЕПКИЙ/Svyatiy krepkiy  
СВЯТЫИ БЕССМЕРТНЫЙ/Svyatiy bessmertniy  
ПОМИЛУЙ НАС/Pomiluy nas.”  
(Holy God  
Holy Strong One  
Holy Eternal One  
Have Mercy on Us.)

The driver was impatient to get to Harbin and back home before dark, so Ivan was not able to pay his last respects to a friend he hardly knew. The sun was hanging over the western horizon on the top of the hills outside town by the time the threesome arrived in the crowded city of Harbin. The streets were busy as usual with China's teeming masses

that scurried through the newly paved streets on their bicycles like ants busily working for their colony.

Ivan and Iov parted ways at the Soviet consulate, where a group of Old Believers were excitedly milling around, waiting for the trucks that would take them back to Mother Russia.

As Ivan rode away from the Soviet consulate, he heard a gramophone blasting out the Soviet national anthem, "The Internationale," a song which tried to unite the whole human race under the banner of the hammer, the sickle and the five-pointed star on the red Soviet flag. Ivan kept waving to Iov until he came to a crossroad, and then he lost sight of him completely. A big lump formed in Ivan's throat as he tried to hold back the tears of parting.

At the train station Ivan ran into Alyosha Chestnoslov, who had just come from the preliminary prayers for the soul of Stefan Durakov.

"Alyosha, my dear friend," exclaimed Ivan as he caught sight of Alyosha with his wife and three children. Alyosha Chestnoslov was six years older than Ivan, and he stood several inches taller than Ivan, who was an inch shy of six feet. Alyosha looked much older than he actually was because of the white streaks in his stringy beard. Ivan and Alyosha had hunted together on numerous occasions, and their topic of conversation usually revolved around hunting. But on this occasion Ivan was interested in finding out more about Stefan's death and funeral.

"Did you see Stefan before you left?" asked Ivan.

"I just came from there," said Alyosha. His face instantly changed in expression from joy to sadness at the mention of Stefan's name. He still felt guilty and partly to blame for the young boy's tragic encounter with the tiger.

"Andrey told me what happened," said Ivan. "It must have been awful."

"The parents didn't want to show their son's face," said Alyosha, twisting his face into a horrible grimace. "His face was so badly scratched by the tiger's claws that it was hard to recognize him. The father built the coffin and covered his



son up so no one would see the unpleasant picture. He wanted everyone to remember his son as a beautiful, handsome young man."

"Andrey didn't tell me about the face," remarked Ivan.

"The father asked us not to tell anyone at the time," confessed Alyosha. "I came to their house yesterday to help the mother dress Stefan in the new white shirt with cross-stitched cherries that she quickly sewed especially for his burial. He was all washed and clean, but he still had the scars on his face. The five pairs of red cherries on the front of his shirt and the five yellow flowers with each pair added some life to his ghastly appearance. The eight cherries sewn around the high collar concealed the ugly gash that the tiger ripped around his neck."

"How were the father and mother taking it?" asked Ivan.

"They wept right along with the others who came to mourn," succinctly stated Alyosha. "The father, you know, built the coffin and the wooden cross with his own hands. He looked tired, and so did the mother."

"It's too bad he won't be making it with us to Hong Kong," remarked Ivan.

"It's a pity," agreed Alyosha. "In fact, we were talking about leaving China during our hunting trip. He was anxious to travel to a new country. But that wasn't God's will for him."

Ivan and Alyosha continued talking about small matters while they waited for the train that would take them to Hong Kong. Masha conversed, in the meantime, with Alyosha's wife, Varvara, who had been born in China ten days after her parents had crossed the border near Khabarovsk. She had Chinese mannerisms from associating with Chinese school children, and her facial features reminded one of the Tartar cross-breeding that had permanently changed and polluted the purity of the white Russian blood back in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Varvara's Asiatic tint in her skin and roundness in her face was characteristic of the half-breed Russian. In fact, at one time it was popular to use the

proverb, "If you scratch the skin of a Russian, underneath you'll find a Tartar."

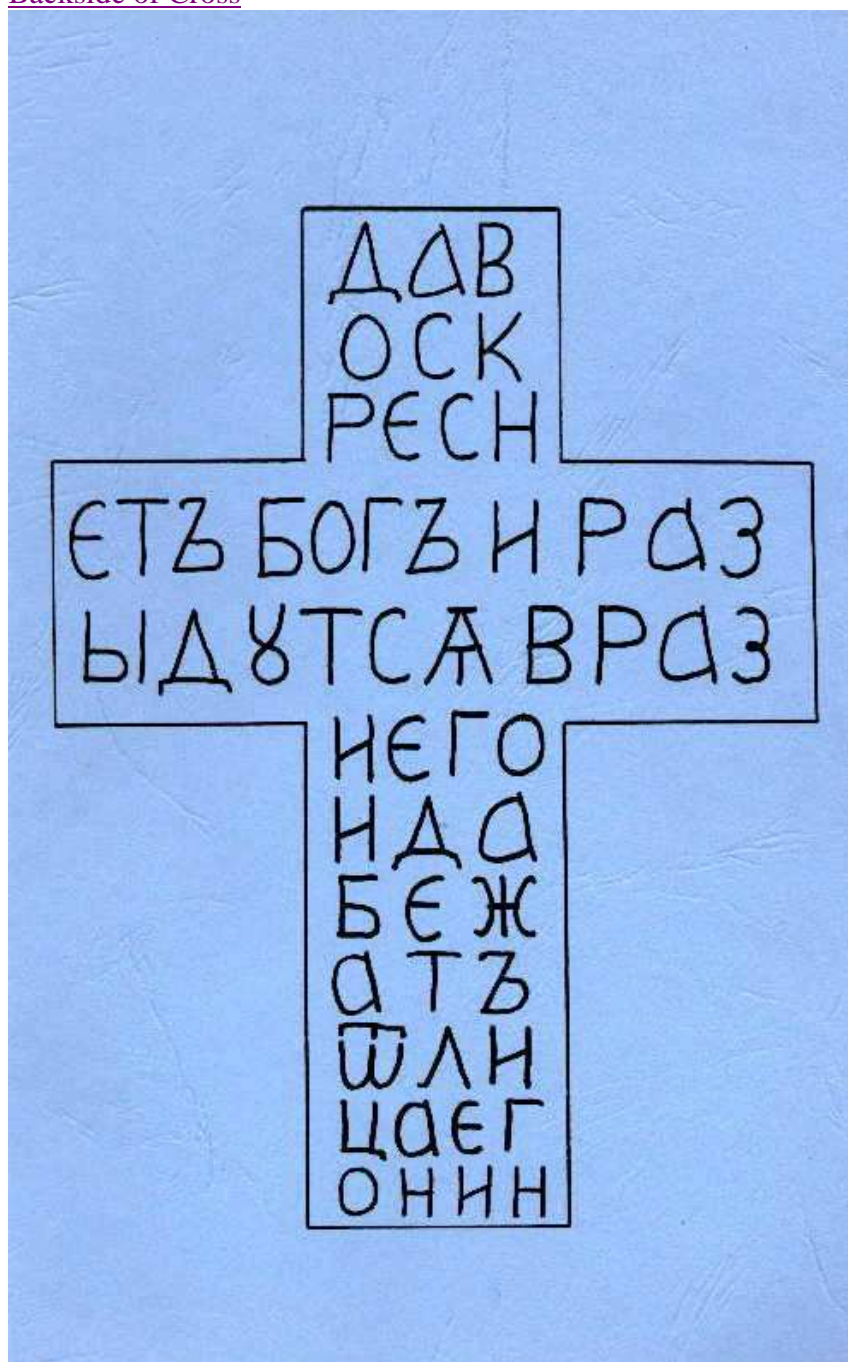
Masha took an instant liking to Varvara, who was fond of children and talked a mile a minute about the three children she gave birth to. Varvara reassured Masha that having children was a climactic experience in a woman's life, an experience that is cherished and relived many times. The two women talked all the time they sat waiting. They talked about giving birth, about babies, and about raising a family. Varvara's three children, in the mean time, played games by the railroad tracks.

It was dark when the train finally arrived at the station. Everything was arranged for the first group of Old Believers to depart for Hong Kong. The officials at the station stamped their papers, and the travelers boarded the train. Ivan and Masha stayed close to their friends, Alyosha and Varvara. The two couples had become inseparable, and their friendship strengthened during the days to come.

Six days later, on the holyday the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the train arrived on the Kowloon side of Hong Kong. The Old Believers had crossed the border into the western world. It was a world of the Englishman, the merchant, and the fast English cars driving on the left hand side of the street. It was a world of international ships transporting goods to and from the other countries of the world. It was a world trade center, and Ivan felt as if he had crossed over into a strange, foreign land where the Russian life as he knew it was virtually non-existent.

Ivan comforted himself on that day, the 14th of September, with the words that he had remembered from the liturgy of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: "O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; grant victory to our Orthodox Believers against the heathen and protect thy people with Thy Cross."

Ivan crossed himself, as did some of his fellow Old Believers, when they left the communist world in China and entered the free world in British Hong Kong.



### Chapter 3 -- "Protection of the Mother of God"

The first group to greet the first train load of Old Believers from Harbin was the United World Council of Churches, an international Christian organization designed with the purpose of preserving the unity of all Christian faiths. Like a protecting mother, the Council desired to take the wandering flock of Old Believers under its expansive wings. To the Council, these Orthodox Russians were also part of the whole Christian Mother Church.

"Thank God we finally were able to get you out of Communist China," said Rev. Billy Freeman, a representative for the Council.

Rev. Freeman approached Ivan and his friend Alyosha with an extended right hand. Ivan was not used to the western handshake, but he nevertheless accepted the powerful handshake as a token of his appreciation for the westerner's help. Ivan had heard that a worldwide organization was instrumental in delivering his people from the Communist world. So he was more than grateful to extend his friendship, his gratitude, and his right hand.

"Большая благодарность вам/Bolshaya blagodarnost vam," began Ivan.

An interpreter immediately rushed to Rev. Freeman's side to translate Ivan's words.

"He says, 'Thank you very much,'" quickly stated the Anglo interpreter.

"Tell the young man here," said Rev. Freeman, pointing to Ivan, "that we are thankful to God for his help in bringing the Russian people out of the Communist world."

The Anglo interpreter translated the words of the reverend into an anglicized form of Russian for Ivan and the group of Old Believers that had clustered around the nucleus of the council representative and the young spokesman for the Old Believers. Ivan felt as if the mantle of his grandfather had fallen upon his shoulders and that he was singled out as the new spiritual leader for his people.

"Скажите вашему представителю, что мы благодарны Богу за помощь которую вы указали нам/Skazhetye vashemu predstavetelyu, shto mi blagodarni Bogy za pomoshch kotoruyou vi ukazali nam," said Ivan as he smiled at Rev. Freeman.

Ivan looked at the western man dressed in a gray suit with a white shirt and blue and yellow striped tie. Ivan dismissed the nagging thought that his benefactor was a beardless man. Instead he thought of the kindness that he saw in the Englishman's eyes as he listened to the interpreter replay his words into the English language.

"This man told me to tell you as our representative, that he and his group are grateful to God for the help and assistance that you have given to them," translated the black-haired interpreter with black-rimmed glasses.

"Your wilderness experience is over now, and, with God's help, we will now try to find you a suitable country to live in," explained Rev. Billy Freeman.

The interpreter struggled through the long sentence, hoping to make sense of the phrase "wilderness experience." Ivan's eyebrows curled upward several times as he tried to comprehend the interpreter's exact meaning. Ivan was especially concerned about the words "suitable country."

"Я думал что всё было устроено уже нам перекочевать в Америку/Ya dumal shto vsyo bilo ustroyeno uzhe nam perekochevat v amariku?" (I thought it was definite that we were migrating to America?) questioned Ivan.

The interpreter looked puzzled for a moment as he tried to thumb quickly through his Russian-English Dictionary for the word "перекочевать/perekochevat." He found it under "кочевать/kochevat," which meant to wander like a nomad from one place to another.

"He says that he thought everything was already arranged for them to migrate or move to America," translated the young Anglo. He put his pocket dictionary back in the inner pocket of his black suit jacket.

"Tell him that it will take some time for us to find sponsors, and we are still not sure which countries will be willing to take them in," said Rev. Billy Freeman, whose smiling face had turned into a serious business-like demeanor. He spoke directly to the interpreter without looking at Ivan.

By now Ivan began to sense that all was not well and that his grandfather was right after all in going back to the bosom of Mother Russia instead of crawling for help to foreigners in whose hands they were helpless and defenseless. Ivan felt inadequate and insecure. He didn't know the language or the people who were supposedly his benefactors and who were nominally interested in his freedom. He felt like a helpless animal running from the claws of one enemy only to fall unawares into the hands of a more subtle enemy; the subtle enemy was the one who promised one thing and delivered something completely unexpected. Ivan listened with shocked ears as the interpreter relayed the message that several countries in South America might be willing to take them and even provide them with free land.

Masha felt as if all her dreams had been shattered when she realized her dream of America might not come true after all. She whispered a short prayer to the protectress, the Mother of God: "Пресвятая госпоже Богородица, моли Бору нас грешников/Presvyataya gospozhe Bogoroditsa, moli Bogu nas greshnikov." (Holy Lady, Mother of God, pray to God for us sinners.) She placed her hands on her womb and whispered an encouraging word to the stirring child-to-be: "Don't worry, I'll take good care of you no matter where we go or where we live."

Ivan began conversing with his fellow Old Believers, whose angry faces began to show behind their manly beards. One thin man with a receding hairline anxiously spoke up: "How will we live while we wait for them to find us a country?" Another older man with a bald spot on the top of his head called out: "What about the promise from our consulate in Harbin that we would be allowed to migrate to America?" The commotion and questions caused disorder in

the lobby of the train station, and the reverend representative was embarrassed at the unruly behavior of his guests.

"Please, don't worry," said Rev. Billy Freeman, raising both his hands into the air and raising his voice to draw attention to himself. The interpreter had been busily translating some of the concerns to the reverend, who saw a need to respond to the rising tumult. "The World Council of Churches has agreed to pay for your stay in Hong Kong while we make arrangements with countries willing to take you in. Some of you will be staying at the Empress Hotel, where the Sinkiang group is already staying. The others will be taken care of by the Red Cross."

The interpreter waved his hand at Rev. Freeman, requesting a chance to translate before he forgot what had been said. The group of Old Believers calmed down as they listened to the words of reassurance.

Ivan was thrilled at the mention of the Sinkiang group. He had heard about them from his Grandfather Iov, and he had always wanted to meet them.

During the next two weeks Ivan and Masha, along with the band of Harbin Old Believers, became acquainted with a state of existence which resembled limbo. It was a "sit and wait" situation, and their patience was slowly running out. Ivan tried to kill the boredom of waiting by visiting with the group from Sinkiang, which was also waiting to go to a free country. Ivan made friends with a tall, strong young man who was two years younger than he was and who was called Vasily Velikov.

Vasily was the first man to relate the news to Ivan on October 4, 1957 that the Soviets had launched a Sputnik ("wanderer") capsule into space. Ivan recalled the young lieutenant's words that Russia was going to reach for the stars. Some of the Old Believers, however, doubted if Russian had actually launched a Sputnik that had sailed up into space, for they believed that God wouldn't permit man to travel beyond the confines of earth.

During their long hours of conversation, Vasily related to Ivan how life in Kulzha (in the Sinkiang Province) had been and how they had raised wheat and watermelons along the Ili River for a living.

"You know," Vasily would say as they sat in Ivan's hotel room, "life was unbearable by the river. You should have seen the size of the mosquitoes near the swamp where we lived. They were huge, and they were everywhere. I don't blame my father for going back to Altai, although I regret what happened to him at the hands of the savage Kirghiz."

"What happened to him?" Ivan would say, as he sat listening to Vasily's endless stories.

"Well," began Vasily, as he gazed out the window at the flowing traffic on Chatham Road. "I remember hearing from a friend who escaped from the vicious Mohammedans (Mahomets), that the Kirghiz men made sport of my father and the nastoyatel (elder) who was with him. They built a huge bonfire one night when the moon was full, and while they were feasting and drinking, the head clansman got into a religious argument with the nastoyatel about praying and about God. The head clansman didn't like the way the nastoyatel kept crossing himself and bowing to the ground and praying, 'Lord, Isous Hristos, be merciful to me a sinner.' He said there was only one God, Allah, and the nastoyatel should pray only to him. When the nastoyatel disagreed, the head clansman in a drunken rage decided to throw both men into the bonfire to see if their God would rescue them. You can imagine the blasphemy that those Mohammedans committed as they tied my father and the nastoyatel to stakes and began saying that Isous was only a prophet like Mahomet, and not a savior and Son of God like the true Orthodox religion taught. I can still hear my friend's words: 'Your father died like a true martyr, for he cried out with a loud voice as he died, "Forgive these pagans, O Lord Isous, for they know not what they do."' The nastoyatel, on the other hand, was condemning the Kirghiz clansman for his ungodly act by saying, 'Мы будем в раю, а ты пойдёшь в вечный огонь/Mi boodyem v rayou, a ti poydyosh v vechniy



ogon.' (We will be in paradise this day, but you will burn in eternal fire.)

Ivan listened to other tales of adventure, including Vasily's account of their group's miraculous journey out of China under the protection of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). Vasily dramatized the story of their escape from the "Soviet hounds" (as he called them), who hounded them day and night in an attempt to lure them back to the Soviet motherland. Ivan winced at the sound of the word 'Soviet,' for the memory of his encounter with the brainwashing officials was still fresh in his mind.

"Those Soviet hounds," Vasily would say, as his fists clenched in anger while staring out across the Hong Kong harbor, "they would guard our villages and make it virtually impossible to escape or leave the country. Even when their leader Khrushchev visited Peking and brought about a change in policy toward Russian refugees, the Soviet officials still kept an eye on us and tried to make us 'come home,' as they expressed it. We used to gather almost daily at our nastoyatel's (elder's) house and pray to the Mother of God and to Hristos to deliver us from the hands of the enemy and from the godless land. I used to pray daily before the ikon of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) holding the God-child, and prayed that she would carry us in her loving arms to a land of freedom. One night we were told that things were ready for us at the train station and all the papers were in order. The Holy Virgin was with us that night, for even the Soviet officials couldn't keep us back any more. The officials watched helplessly as we boarded the train at Kulzha and headed for Urumchi. We drove through Hamey, then Turfun, Landzo, and Shanghai. Finally, we passed through Canton and arrived here at Hong Kong.

Vasily had many stories to relate, and Ivan patiently sat and played the role of a good listener. Vasily's wife, Zinaida, often sat by her husband's side and listened to the dramatic presentations of her husband, who would wave his hands about. Sometimes he would pace back and forth in front of the window as he told his stories.

Sometimes Zinaida would divert her attention from her husband to one of her three young daughters. The youngest was Irina, who was one-and-a-half. The oldest was Nadezhda, who was five. The one in the middle was the cutest and the most talkative; her name was Anastasia, and she had just turned three. All three daughters were cleanly dressed in their native sarafans (dresses), whose colorful flower designs added life and beauty to the dull foreign land filled with tall gray buildings.

One of the days was somewhat enlivened when Rev. Billy Freeman drove up to the Empress Hotel in a bus he had received permission to use for a sight-seeing tour. A happy group of Old Believers crowded into the bus for a guided tour of Kowloon and the New Territories. Arrangements were also made to take the group across the Hong Kong harbor by way of the Jordan Road Vehicular Ferry. A visit to the Tiger Balm Gardens was of particular interest to the religious group, for here they were introduced to the gods and goddesses of the Buddhist religion; some were amazed, while others were repulsed, at the sculpturing of Buddhist scenes, like two fiery dragons facing each other and five meditating Buddhas in a grotto.

It was during this ride that Rev. Billy Freeman tried to strike up a closer friendship with Ivan by inquiring into the Old Belief. One of the things that puzzled Rev. Freeman most was the strict adherence to the old style Julian calendar.

"Why is it that you Old Believers, or Old Ritualists, as I've heard others call you," said Rev. Freeman through his interpreter, "have always adhered to the old style Julian calendar? Doesn't that put you 13 days behind the rest of the world?"

"No, it doesn't," answered Ivan. "It means that the rest of the world is 13 days out of time and out of step with the mysteries of Hristos and redemption as observed by our church calendar."

The interpreter tried to keep apace with the theological discussion that was developing.

"But our World Council of Churches has tried to unite all Christian churches under the banner of the one savior, Jesus Christ," argued Rev. Freeman, "and we believe there are no real distinctions in the true Church of Christ. We are One in Christ." Rev. Freeman instantly recalled the famous axiom of John Calvin, the great reformer: "We believe that salvation can come only through the Church."

"How can we be one," stated Ivan, "when you do not observe the fast days, nor do you honor the holy image of Hristos not made with hands, nor do you wear a beard to reflect the heavenly image of God the father. Your faith is much different than ours."

"We might have different points of view on how to observe the Christian faith," responded Rev. Freeman, "but we have a freedom in Christ that frees us from the strict confines of the old law of ritual and sacrifice and gives us a new law of love and grace to live by and to be saved by."

"I have been told by my grandfather that your religion has an image of Hristos crucified on four extremities or ends," said Ivan, "whereas our faith teaches that the cross of Hristos consisted of eight ends." Ivan paused and waited for the interpreter to translate his words.

"That, no doubt, is a matter of fact," apologized Rev. Freeman. "I have been told by some local Buddhist priests that their cross the swastika, which is their symbol of enlightenment, also has eight extremities or limbs coming out of a central point. It supposedly signifies an eightfold path of the soul. But I believe that it makes no difference what kind of cross it was. What matters is the saving blood that was shed by the Son of God on that cross."

The Presbyterian minister began to feel a missionary zeal surge through his blood as he tried to convert his listener to accept the freedom of the spirit that he had experienced in his early youth. Ivan, on the other hand, became more uncomfortable as he talked with what he considered to be a pagan, in the sense that his belief or faith was not orthodox.

"Anyway, getting back to my original question," said Rev. Freeman after Ivan failed to respond to his previous

statement. "Don't you think that having identical calendars would help all Christian churches to understand the unity of Christ and to show the un-Christian world that our belief in Christ is One? After all, when we celebrate the birth of Christ on December the 25th, your calendar says that it's only December the 12th, and so you wait till, what to us is, the 7th (of January) to celebrate his birth."

"That's right, you should have the same calendar as we have," answered Ivan. "As I was saying earlier, the entire mystery of Hristos is precisely timed by our church calendar, and if we observe a holyday on some other day or at another time, we would not be in conjunction and harmony with the heavenly hosts who are united with us at that time. Do you understand?"

"I think I understand," answered Rev. Freeman without any further rebuttal.

The two men rode quietly for the rest of the trip. They were poles apart from each other, and their differences seemed to be irreconcilable. One side was as far removed from the other as the north region was from the south region. Whereas one extremity was founded on the cold, harsh calculating observance of ritualistic law in order to obtain salvation, the other extremity was founded on the warm unrestricted freedom of the spirit of grace, which simply granted salvation by faith in Christ.

Two days later, on October the 1st, according to the old style Julian calendar (or October the 14th, for those who follow the new style Gregorian calendar), Ivan and his friend Vasily went to the Shaukiwan fishing village to make some money. They had been told by the World Council of churches that things would be provided for them, but the Old Believers felt insecure in a strange land without any money, and so they decided to venture out on their own. The wives of the men encouraged the men to find jobs where they could at least make a few dollars for personal needs. One of the Old Believers, Antip, who had escaped illegally from China a year previously, had several connections in town with

friendly Chinamen with whom he was able to converse. Antip Svyatogorov was a strong, rebellious type of a man. He felt he was the law, and therefore, he was against all forms of man-made rules and regulations. He was stubborn in his belief that man must first of all look out for himself and for his family no matter what others said. Laws that contradicted his sense of survival and struggle for a secure existence were disobeyed and nullified without any sense of guilt or wrongdoing.

Antip Svyatogorov had discovered in China that following legal procedures was difficult, and sometimes even dangerous. As the threesome Antip, Ivan and Vasily crossed the harbor on the Star Ferry, Antip told his new friends the story of his escape from Chinese authorities.

"It was about a year ago when I found life in Kulzha simply intolerable," said Antip. "The Chinese authorities were merciless. It was also at that time when I first heard rumors about people going to America. Many of us wished to go there, but getting the legal documents to get to Hong Kong first was impossible. The Soviet consulate in Kulzha held our documents in Moscow, and it was forbidden by their authorities to help religious exiles to leave their jurisdiction. After all, as long as they had us trapped in China like wild animals in a zoo, they could round us up and carry us back to Russia. I saw them take truckloads of our people at the point of a rifle. I had a friend who was jailed for trying to contact the British consulate in Hong Kong. The Soviets, of course, had the Chinese puppets put constant pressure on our people. That's when I decided to run away.

"I had been married for less than two months and I was living with my parents, as is our custom. My wife, Evgenia, was only eighteen, and I was twenty-two. When I told my wife about my plans, she cried. It was hard for her to leave her parents. My parents were afraid for me and told me the authorities would find us and shoot us for trying to escape.

"Nevertheless, on one cold October night I hired a brave Chinese friend of mine to give me a ride into town. I remember we had just finished the church service in honor of

the Protection of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). I also remember holding closely the ikon of the Bogoroditsa that Evgenia's parents gave us as a present on our wedding day. I had the small ikon in my coat pocket next to my heart, and throughout the entire night I kept repeating the prayer I had prayed at the night service:

“Приими от нас недостойных рабов твоих и ныне всепетая пресвятая Богородица, не престай молящися о нас недостойных рабов твоих, еже избавитися нам от всякого совета лукавого, и от всякого обстояния и сохранитися нам неврежденным от всякого ядовитого прилога дьявольского: но даже до конца молитвами твоими неосужденных нас соблюди, яко да твоим заступлением и помощью спасаемы, славу, хвалу, благодарение и поклонение за вся . . . Priymi ot nas negostoynih rabov tvoikh e neene vsepetaya presvyataya Bogoroditsa, ne prestigh molyashchisya o nas nedostoynikh rabov tvoyikh, ezhe izbavitisya nam ot vsyakogo soveta lukavogo, e ot vsyakogo obstoyaniya e sohranitisya nam nevrezhdyenim ot vsyakogo yadovitogo priloga diyavolskogo: no dazhe do kontsa molitvami tvoyimi neosuzhdyonikh nas soblyudi, yako da tvoyim zastupleniyem e pomoshchiyu spasayemi, slavu, hvalu, blagodarenije e pokloneniye za vsya . . .”

(Accept from us unworthy servants of yours this day our prayer, o highly-praised Holy Mother of God, and never stop praying for us unworthy servants of yours, to deliver us from every advice of the evil one and from every bad circumstance and that we remain unharmed from every poisonous attack of the devil: but even to the end keep us from judgment with your prayers, for it is with your intercession and help that we are saved; praise, glory, thanksgiving and adoration with bowing for everything . . . )

Antip was cut short by a sharp whistle from the ferry. The Star Ferry had made its short trip across the harbor, but Antip had more to relate. He waited until they walked off the pier and began walking toward Antip's friend's shop on

Queen's Road Central. Antip knew his way around the Hong Kong side, and so he led the way.

"As I was saying," continued Antip, as he headed for the tall buildings in the business section, "I kept praying real hard, for I didn't know what dangers lay ahead. My Chinese friend, whom I paid well, was a professional smuggler, and he had us well hidden in his farm truck. At one point we were stopped by Soviet guards who patrolled the roads, and my heart almost burst, but we made it past them. At the train station we had to sneak past Soviet agents; our friend helped get the tickets for us. We made it safely to Shanghai, but there we were detained by Chinese officials who were suspicious of us, and they found out from Soviet officials that we were refugees. But the holy Mother protected us, and we were able to finally talk the officials into letting us go to Hong Kong."

Antip finally rounded the corner to Queen's Road Central and led the way to the shop named Hong Kong Treasures. His Chinese friend, an avid fisherman, had promised to take him to the fishing village at Shaukiwan, where he had his own sampan with a motor and plenty of fishing equipment. They would catch some fish near Stonecutter's Island and then sell the fish at one of the fish markets.

The ride on the sampan was bumpy and slow, but the view was extraordinary. The harbor was full of ships, junks, sampans, ferryboats, and every imaginable water vessel. By mid-afternoon the three men and their Chinese friend had caught enough fish around the rocks of Stonecutter's Island to make a small profit. They were ready to begin the journey back to shore when the wind in the harbor started to pick up.

"I think we're going to have a typhoon," warned the Chinese friend, pointing to the cloudy sky and the fierce wind.

The three Russians sensed danger, and Antip, in his broken Chinese that he had learned in Chinese schools, asked his friend if he was going to go to the typhoon shelter.

"I hope we make it back in time," anxiously exclaimed the Chinese friend as he put his motor on full throttle. They had

been fishing on the far side of the island, and they had to cover several miles to get to the Yaumati Typhoon Shelter on the Kowloon side.

"The typhoons come very fast here in Hong Kong," yelled the Chinese friend as the sampan bumped against the rising waves.

The three Russians held firmly to the sides of the sampan as the waves tossed the boat from side to side. Ivan felt his stomach churn inside and he was beginning to feel sick. Antip prayed to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) and to St. Nikola. Vasily clenched his teeth and peered through the slashing wind toward the typhoon shelter. Ivan kept wondering why he was in such a predicament and why the feeling of death haunted him whenever he felt sick to his stomach.

The sampan finally made its way past the causeway and into the Yaumati Typhoon Shelter, and the seasick men on board were relieved. Antip once again felt his prayers to the Holy Virgin for help had been answered. She had come to their aid and sheltered them from harm in time of storm and troubles. Ivan was throwing his lunch overboard. Vasily was holding his stomach and trying to keep the feeling of sickness from coming to the surface. The Chinese friend was smiling as he watched the three men turn pale from fear and sickness.



## Chapter 4 -- "Presentation of the Mother of God"

"We have a ship for you," exclaimed Rev. Freeman a month after his last encounter with the Old Believers. "It's an Italian ship and it will be able to take a small group of your people to Rome, where you will be transferred onto a Spanish ship for your journey to Brazil. The rest of you will have to wait for a Spanish ship that will take you directly to Brazil without having to transfer." His interpreter translated the message into Russian.

Ivan and his group looked at each other at first with joy and excitement in their faces, but then a worried and puzzled look came over their faces. 'Of all the places in the world,' thought Ivan. 'Why did it have to be Rome. That's our arch-enemy and home of the ante-Hrist, the Pope.'

"Это наверно Божья воля/Eto naverno Bozhiya volya," (It no doubt is the will of God for us) said Ivan after a moment of silence. The others in the group nodded their heads in agreement. They all sensed limitations in dealing with the over-ruling hand of destiny that was controlled by God. To sail through hell for a heavenly cause would be no easy task.

"We'd better go now," whispered Masha as she stood by Ivan. "The baby's due any day now, and I wouldn't want to wait much longer for another ship. I'd like to see our baby born in the new land."

Ivan shared his wife's feelings, and he announced to his fellow-travelers: "I'm for going on this first ship out of Hong Kong."

"Я с тобой/Ya s toboy!" (I'm with you) shouted Vasily and Antip in unison. The others in the group rallied behind Ivan with renewed excitement and expectations.

Rev. Billy Freeman stood by and listened without the interpreter relaying the Old Believers' words back to him. He understood the emotions that were displayed on their faces, and he read the initial puzzlement and latter joy on their transparent faces. He felt happy for them. He didn't tell them the details of how hard he had worked to arrange with

several Latin American countries to accept a group of hard-working refugees. He had finally reached an agreement with Brazil, Argentina, and, with the help of the British consulate in Hong Kong, also Australia and New Zealand for a limited number. His altruistic motives were known only to his God, although he had been known as a humanitarian within the World Council of Churches for many years.

Two days later the Old Believers boarded an Italian ship and sailed out of Hong Kong down the South China Sea. After a short stop in India, the ship sailed on to Pakistan. It was during this stretch of the journey that Masha awoke one night before dawn and shook her sleeping husband.

"Ivan, Ivan," cried Masha. "I just had a strange dream."

"What?" answered Ivan sleepily. "What is it?"

"I just had a dream about a bearded old man in a long white hooded robe with a round sandalwood dot on his forehead," said Masha.

"You were just seeing one of the Indian men that came aboard last night," explained Ivan, trying to be rational and sensible about the whole matter.

"The strange thing about the man," proceeded Masha with her dream, "was that he brought a baby boy to me and sat him on my lap and said, 'He needs some of your nourishing milk or else he'll die.' Then he left me alone with the baby boy, and I took him to my breast and gave him milk."

Masha felt a surging feeling flow sporadically through her breast, and she felt a wetness accumulate on her clothes. The dream had become so real to her that it had manifested itself in reality.

"That must be a sign from God that you will have a boy," explained Ivan proudly.

"The strange part about the dream that frightened me and woke me up," continued Masha, "was the part where I saw myself feeding the baby. It was as if I were looking through one of the port holes in the ship. As I looked closer I saw that the mother and child both had a dark complexion, just like the Indian who brought me the child."

"That sure is strange," said Ivan, as the turnabout in the story made him concerned about the meaning of the dream.

"That's when I awoke and started to call to you for help," said Masha. "I was frightened when I saw the dark faces."

"There's a crapeu/starets (elder man) aboard who might be able to tell you the meaning of your dream," said Ivan after his intuitive mind failed to give him an answer to the mysterious dream.

When morning finally arrived and the morning star faded into the eastern horizon, the sleepless Masha walked out on the deck of the ship and watched the sun cast its rays upon the azure waters. She appeared to be keeping a vigil, for she stood motionless against the rail of the cruising ship and watched the changing images in the sky and in the waters as the sun made its appearance on the stage of the new day.

By mid-morning the ship was bustling with its usual life of playful children, carousing lovers, gossiping women, adventure-minded young men, and reflective old men amidst the workaday world of the crew that kept the old ship sailing.

Ivan found the crapeu/starets (elder man) named Simeon that he had mentioned to Masha, and he brought the elder man of the Sinkiang group to their small cabin. Simeon was the nastoyatel (minister) for the group from Sinkiang. After Masha related the dream to the elder man, he crossed himself and whispered a prayer with eyes open and then turned toward Masha.

"You have been blessed with a dream from God," began Simeon as his light blue eyes stared into Masha's face. "The man who brought you the child was the messenger of the Lord. He showed you not only the future of your personal life, but he also showed you the condition of the Church, which is the Mother of us all. Her complexion is dark because of the sadness and suffering she is going through in these dark, last days. She was given the child to suckle, because without her there would be no hope of life or salvation for men. The child was also dark like the mother because of the suffering he was bearing for mankind; the child is Hristos, who came as a child and was the Word made

flesh through the Blessed Дева/Deva (Virgin). Since the world was dark with sin, he became dark with sin in order to redeem the world from darkness. He was the son of man in the flesh and a Son of God at the same time. That is the duality which we profess when we cross ourselves with two fingers instead of the heretical way of three fingers like the Latins do."

The words of the elder man sounded stranger to Masha than the dream itself. It appeared to Masha that the gray-bearded Simeon was trying to teach her the mystery of some profound religious truth that she was not able to grasp.

"Our teacher, Maksim the Greek, taught us how to make the sign of the cross," continued Simeon, as he expounded on his favorite theme. He seemed to have crossed over from interpreting the dream to expounding his pet doctrines. "He taught that we should have the thumb and last two fingers in a group to signify the Trinity, and the first two fingers, the index and middle fingers, held together extended, the middle one a little bent downward, to signify the two natures of Isous Hristos."

Masha took her eyes off the elder man's wrinkled face for a minute as she was momentarily captivated by the beautiful design of grapes on his violet pyбaxa/rubaha (shirt). She loved to copy patterns from designs that she thought her husband would love to wear. She studied the three clusters, with seven purple grapes in each cluster, and she imprinted the pattern in her mind, noticing that each cluster of seven was joined by a vine and some green leaves. Around the collar she observed five clusters, with five purple grapes in each cluster, which were also joined by a vine and some green leaves. She told herself that she would set to work immediately with cross-stitching the pattern for a new shirt for Ivan. She hoped to finish it before the arrival of the baby so that Ivan would be able to have a new shirt at the birth of the baby. She had already forgotten the strange dream as her mind leaped into future possibilities and future joys.

Simeon, in the mean time, continued to expound on the sacred doctrine of making the sign of the cross on the face:

"Our other teacher, St. Basil, told us: 'Знамение сие яко венец царя нашего Христа на главе своей носим/Znamiyiye siye yako venets tsarya nashego Hrista na glavay svoeyi nosim.' (This sign is like the crown of our king Hristos that we wear on our head.) By making the sign of the holy cross, we pray that God will deliver us from evil and that he would give us his blessing. Whenever you have a bad thought just cross yourself quickly and say: 'Господи Исусе Христе, сыне Божий, помилуй мя/Gospodi Isousye Hristye, sinye Bozhiy, pomilui mya.' (Lord Isous Hristos, Son of God, have mercy on me.) The evil thought will instantly flee from you."

Simeon was thinking of citing some examples from the Scriptures of how the sign of the cross was first displayed during the Passover when blood was placed on the door posts, and during the exodus when Moses struck the Red Sea with his rod and then lifted his left and right hands to the heavens, but at that moment Vasily knocked on the cabin door and entered to announce that they were arriving at a port in Pakistan.

Masha felt relieved, for she was anxious to get on with her sewing work. She felt that church talk belonged to the men folk, and besides, she was too young to understand the complex teachings of the religion she was born into. 'Let the men worry their heads about what religion teaches,' thought Masha. "I have woman's work to do."

And so Masha spent most of her days cross-stitching a new shirt for her husband and thinking of what she would make for her new-born child. As the Italian ship sailed away from Pakistan and headed for Italy, Masha began to sketch the design of the seven grapes on a white cloth. After she penciled in all the lines and boundaries, she picked up the needle with the purple thread and began the long and arduous task of creating a colorful work of art with her own hands.

Eventually the Italian ship made its way up the Red Sea and through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea. There, where the ancients taught the middle of the earth was

located, the Old Believers experienced their first major storm at sea. Lightning flashed in the western sky and the waves clashed against the ship in an effort to either swallow up the ship or to send it crashing against the rocks near the island of Crete. Masha couldn't sleep the entire night as the tossing of the ship at sea made the fetus within the womb respond with powerful kicks against Masha's ribs.

“Пресвятая госпоже Богородица, моли Богу нас грешного/Presvyataya gospozhe Bogoroditsa, moli Bogu nas greshnego,” (Most Holy Lady and Mother of God, pray to God for us sinners) prayed Masha. She fingered her black, woolen лестовка/lestovka (rosary) to keep count with the repetitions.

By morning the storm subsided, and the ship safely sailed along the coast of Italy. It wasn't long after that fierce storm that the ship finally sailed unharmed into the harbor of Rome--The Eternal City.

"Well, at least we'll get a look at the city where St. Paul and St. Peter walked," said Antip Svyatogorov as the Old Believers lined up against the railing to watch the ship dock. "Just don't think of going into a Latin church," warned Simeon. "We don't want to be stained with their heretical teachings."

"A man from the consulate is supposed to meet us and explain to us how long we must wait for the Spanish ship," said Ivan.

"I'd like to see the grandeur of Rome before it fell," announced Vasily Velikov.

"God punished Rome for its heresies," explained Simeon. "They proclaimed the pope to be infallible and ruler of all Christendom, and they expected all the churches to use only the Latin tongue in their liturgy."

"I heard that some of the pagan temples are still standing in Rome," said Vasily, without paying much attention to Simeon's words. Vasily was directing his words at Ivan in an attempt to attract a touring partner. "I'd like to visit the legendary seven hills, too."

"That wouldn't be a bad idea," responded Ivan, "but first I've got to make sure all our papers are in order with the consulate. We sure don't want to get stuck in Rome, not after all the things I've heard about their pagan ways."

It turned out that the Old Believers had to wait several days for the Spanish ship to depart for Brazil. In the meantime, they were given temporary quarters to sleep in, and they were allowed to go sight-seeing. Vasily coaxed Ivan and Antip to tour the city together in a small bus, which a consulate guide was kind enough to drive them around in. The elder man, Simeon, had no family to be with, so Ivan invited him to join them for the ride.

The guide took them first to the major attraction in the city--St. Peter's Church on Vatican Hill. A mass was being said on that day--November 21st, by the Old Believer's reckoning--in honor of the Virgin Mary who was presented as a child in the temple to be trained and taught how to serve and prepare herself to be a handmaiden of the Lord.

Masha was amazed at the tall pillars and grandiose statues. Some of the nude figures around the plazas made her face turn red with embarrassment. She was impressed, however, with the throng of people that came to pay respect to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). She watched several Catholic worshippers make the sign of the cross.

"They cross themselves differently than we do," observed Masha.

"Тому маханию беси радуются/Тому mahaniyu besi raduyutsya," (The demons rejoice at that kind of waving of hands) chimed in Simeon.

The guide was trained in several languages, including Russian, and he attempted to explain and demonstrate the ritual of crossing to the curious spectators.

"The Latin sign of the cross," said the guide, "is made by placing the left hand on the breast and with the right hand touching the forehead and saying, 'In the name of the Father,' then moving the right hand to the breast and saying, 'and of the Son'; then moving to touch the left shoulder and saying, 'and of the Holy . . .', and then touching the right shoulder

saying, 'Spirit, Amen.' That's the sign by which sins are forgiven." The guide finished his speech and demonstration.

"Now you see how deep the Latins got into heretical teachings," exclaimed Simeon. The elder man could not sit still and watch what he considered to be blasphemous signs being made. "You saw how he made the Nikonian sign of the first three fingers clumped together. We know, according to our great Church council of 1551 called Стоглав/Stoglav (Hundred Chapters), that the Russian church rituals are the true and orthodox ones, for we preserved the holy and original teachings of Hristos as they were handed down to us by the church fathers and saints."

"They even place their hand on different parts of the body," remarked Ivan.

"We use the two top fingers to show the revealed dual nature of Hristos as man and God," proceeded Simeon with his explanation. "The three bottom fingers, thumb and third with fourth, conceal the great mystery of the Trinity. The top finger which is bent (the second one) shows the descent of the Son of God from heaven to earth. When the index finger touches the forehead it means the one Truth and Head of the Church, which is Hristos. The two fingers descending to the navel region shows the descent to earth and incarnation in the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). When we place our hand on the right shoulder it signifies that Hristos sits as judge on the right hand of the father. And when we place our hand on the left shoulder we point to the second coming and the Last Judgment, 'На муку вечную или на живот вечный/na muku vechnuyu Eli na zhivot vechniy.'" (either for eternal suffering or for everlasting life.)

The guide watched as Simeon demonstrated the way of the Old Belief. Masha also watched with renewed interest as she began to understand the true significance behind her religion. She had performed the act of making the sign of the cross without much thought before, but now her mind dwelt on the vast significance behind every motion and every gesture that the hand made. She related it to the careful and precise movement of the hand in cross-stitching, and then



she began to understand that the hand weaves many patterns upon the tapestry of life. She was proud of the patterns that she had been taught to make. The religious patterns and the patterns of nature embroidered on a shirt or blouse were the temple of God's world that she entered into and communed with whenever she went to church or whenever she worked on her cross-stitching. One pattern was of the soul, the other of the heart.

The guide spent some time driving the group of Old Believers through some temple ruins including those dedicated to Saturn and other gods who had been transplanted from Greece to Rome. Most of the Old Believers were not too impressed with the pagan past. Antip Svyatogorov, on the other hand, seemed to be asking the guide a lot of questions about Greek mythology and about all the attractions of the seven hills.

It was on the site of the Athenaeum, the temple dedicated to Athena (goddess of Wisdom), that Simeon was inspired to address the small group of Old Believers assembled there and relate to them the teaching about Moscow--the Third Rome.

"I don't know if any of you are acquainted with the 'Повесть о Белом Клобуке/Povest o Belom Klobuke' (Tale of the White Cowl)," started Simeon as he faced the group that was intently staring at the ruins of the temple. Ivan's ears perked up as he heard the words "The White Cowl," for he had indeed heard from his Grandfather Iov about the legendary white hooded robe that was a symbol of spiritual power and of the Resurrection; white also represented purity and saintliness to Ivan, but now he remembered his grandfather's interpretation of white as being the radiance of the Resurrection of Hristos.

"The Blessed Monk Filofey wrote four hundred years ago that all Christian kingdoms would unite into the kingdom of Russia, according to the prophetic books," spoke Simeon in a loud voice. "Both Romes, the one we're standing on and the one in Constantinople, had fallen, and Moscow, the third Rome, had become the sole defender of the Eastern

Orthodox Church. A fourth kingdom was never to be, for the prophet Daniel had announced that the final kingdom of the one true faith would never be destroyed. Since the Kingdom of the Father and the Kingdom of the Son had occurred, it was up to Russia to take up the banner of the final Kingdom of the Holy Spirit.

"It was all foretold in the story about the White Cowl. The holy White Cowl was created by the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, for the Blessed Pope Sylvester in the year 297, which according to our Russian chroniclers was the year 5805. It so happened that Constantine was suffering from an incurable illness, and an evil magician told him that the blood of three thousand infants would cure him if he bathed in it. But the emperor had a vision of the Apostles Paul and Peter, who told him that Pope Sylvester, who was in hiding, could show him a fountain of salvation which would cure the emperor's affliction. However, the emperor in return had to grant new rights to the Christian Church and make Christianity the national religion. Well, the emperor was cured because he obeyed the vision, and the persecutions of the Christians ended. To reward Pope Sylvester, the emperor gave him the White Cowl, which showed that spiritual power was above worldly power. The emperor left the keys to the Eternal City in the hands of the pope, and he went to rule the Eastern, or Byzantine, Roman Empire in the city named after him--Constantinople.

"After Pope Sylvester died, the White Cowl was held sacred until the division arose between the Eastern and Western Churches in the ninth century. The Latin heresy of papal supremacy over the entire Church was rejected by the East, and the White Cowl had to be miraculously rescued from the heretics, who were planning at that time to destroy it.

"It was then that the virtuous Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, had a vision of a youth of about sixteen from whom a great light shone and who told the patriarch about the White Cowl. Philotheus was to send the white Cowl to the Russian land, where it was to be worn on the head of

Vasily, Archbishop of Novgorod. This same youth had appeared previously to the heretical pope in Rome and had scared him into sending the white hooded robe to Constantinople. When the White Cowl arrived in Constantinople in an ark, and the vision of Philotheus was verified, the people rejoiced and the church of Hagia Sophia was blessed with many miracles.

"The Patriarch Philotheus, as you might guess, wanted to keep the blessed White Cowl for himself, and he prayed about it. After Matins one Sunday, after his usual prayers, he lay down to rest, and in his sleep he saw two men come through the door. One of them was armed as a warrior and had an imperial crown on his head, and the other wore bishop's vestments. The man in the bishop's robe was Pope Sylvester, and he foretold that the city of Constantinople would be taken by the nomadic sons of Hagar because of its sins, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit would be revealed in the third Rome, which was to be the land of Russia. He also foretold that all Christians would unite into one Russian nation because of its orthodoxy, and he said it was predestined since ancient times that radiant Russia would become more honorable than the two Romes which preceded it. Then he commanded the Patriarch Philotheus, who was seized by great awe, to send the holy White Cowl to the Russian land. The other man in the vision, Emperor Constantine, silently confirmed the pope's words.

"When the patriarch awoke he went to the church, fell before the ikon of the Holy Mother of God, and wept for a long time. Finally he did as he was told, and he put the White Cowl back in the ark and sent it to the Russian land. In the city of Novgorod the Great, the virtuous Archbishop Vasily had a dream in which he saw the angel of God. This angel of God was dressed like a monk, and he wore the White Cowl upon his head. He announced that the White Cowl was to come to Novgorod from the patriarch on the morrow. Vasily was to accept the symbol of the radiant Resurrection, which came to pass on the third day. After the angel of God said

that his visit was a sign that God's will was done, he became invisible.

"After Vasily woke up he pondered the meaning of the vision. The following morning he sent a procession outside the city, to the crossroads, to see if the White Cowl would appear. Sure enough, the ark with the White Cowl in it arrived as foretold by the angel of God. The venerable gift was placed in the middle of the Cathedral of Holy Sophia, the Wisdom of God. There they celebrated the service of thanksgiving, during which time a voice came from the ikon of the Lord, saying, 'Holy, Holy,' and then after a short silence the voice announced thrice in Greek, 'Ispola eti despota' (Many years to the Lord). All the people who heard these voices were seized with awe and joy, and they said, 'The Lord have mercy upon us.' Then Vasily told the people his vision, and he put the White Cowl on his head, and from that day to this day the White Cowl has remained in the Russian land."

"Is it true that the grave of Archbishop Vasily was discovered after the second world war?" asked Ivan, who remembered his grandfather verifying the story from a recent archeological find.

"Yes," answered Simeon. "I remember hearing about it from orthodox people who had crossed the Altai Mountains into Kulzha a year after the war for the Fatherland. They said that his grave was opened, and in it was found the sacred White Cowl."

"It is truly magnificent," said Masha, who was enthralled by the spirit of the tale. She felt close to the Russian people and to the role that they were playing as the chosen people of the final kingdom on earth. It was as if suddenly the whole meaning of existence had become clear to Masha, and she understood why she would always preserve the Old Belief of the Russian people as it had been given to them by the messengers of God. She would teach her children what she had been taught. She would be a keeper of the Flame no matter where in the world she would journey.

"What is truly amazing," spoke up Antip, who had been sitting on a rock and musing about the extraordinary tale, "is that we were led by God to the place where it all began. It's amazing how far we have gone since Roman times from Catholic heresy to Russian Orthodoxy."

"I will never forget the story Simeon told us," said Vasily. "It will remain etched on my heart and mind as long as I live."

### SIGN OF THE CROSS



## Chapter 5 -- "St. Nicholas the Wonderworker"

Eleven days before the Old Believers' holyday of St. Nikola (Святой Никола/Svyatoy Nikola) on December 19, according to the new style Gregorian calendar, a Spanish ship sailed out of the harbor of Rome on its epic journey to a new world. The Old Believers were promised a piece of land somewhere in South America. The ship sailed smoothly past the invisible prime meridian, and later it slowly passed the visible rock of Gibraltar.

As the ship sailed into the Atlantic Ocean, the mood of the waters changed and the clouds overhead began to exert a disquieting influence. Masha was unaware of the approaching storm. She sat in her small cabin-room and cross-stitched the last purple grape for her husband's new shirt, which she wanted him to wear at the baptismal ceremony. She finished the green leaves, and then she sewed the completed design onto a violet рубаха/rubaha (shirt). The three clusters of seven purple grapes on the front panel and the five clusters of five grapes on the collar made an impressive picture.

Masha had just finished putting her needle away when Ivan came into the compartment and told her the latest news--there was a storm brewing at sea. Masha's hands instinctively moved onto her womb as if to protect her child from harm. Masha was afraid for her baby-to-be, and Ivan saw Masha's apprehension written all over her face. He took out his cherished ikon of St. Nikola from his suitcase and placed it in the corner of the room. He lit a beeswax candle in front of the image of Russia's patron saint, and then he crossed himself and made several obeisances to the floor. It was too difficult for Masha to make a full поклон/poklon (obeisance), so she bowed only with her head.

Masha listened as Ivan prayed to the patron saint, St. Nikola:

"Правило вере, и образ кротости,  
воздержанию учителя яви ты господь  
стаду своему, яже вещем истина,

сего ради стяжав смирением высокая,  
нищетою богатая отче наш святителю Николае,  
моли Христа Бога спастися душам нашим. /  
Pravilo verye, e obraz krotosti,  
vozderzhaniyu oochitelya yavi tyа gospog'  
stadu svoyemu, yazhe veshchem istina,  
sego radi styazhav smireniyem visokaya,  
nishchetoyou bogataya otche nash svyatitelyou  
Nikolaye

moli Hrista Boga spastisya doosham nashim."

(Thy work of justice did show thee to thy congregation a canon of faith, the likeness of humility, a teacher of abstinence, O father, Bishop Nicholas. Wherefore, by humility thou didst achieve exaltation, and by meekness, richness. Intercede, therefore, with Hristos to save our souls.)

Afterwards, Masha joined her husband in the familiar prayer, "Our Father":

О́че на́ших ѡ́же е́си на  
 не́бѣхъ ѡ́ да сѣ́титсѧ и́мѧ  
 твоѣ ѡ́ да прѣ́идетъ црѣ́вѣ  
 твоѣ ѡ́ да бѣ́детъ во́ля твоѧ ѡ́  
 ꙗ́ко на́ не́си и́ на зе́млѣ .  
 хлѣ́бъ на́шихъ насѣ́щныи ѡ́  
 да́ждь на́мъ днѣ́сь . и́ ѡ́стави  
 на́мъ до́лги на́ша ѡ́  
 ꙗ́коже и́ мы ѡ́ставлѧ́емъ  
 до́лжники́мъ на́шимъ . и́ не  
 ве́ди на́съ во и́скѣ́шнїе ѡ́ но  
 и́збави на́съ ѿ́ лука́ваго .

Otche nash, izhe yesi na  
 nebesakh, da svyatitsya imya  
 tvoye, da priydet tsarstviye  
 tvoye, da boodyet volya tvoya,  
 yako na nebesye e na zemlye.  
 Hlyeb nash nasushniy,  
 gazhg nam gnes. E ostavi  
 nam dolgee nashya,  
 yakozhe e mi ostavlyayem  
 dolzhnikami nashim. E ne  
 vedi nas vo iskusheniye, no  
 izbavi nas ot lukavogo.



(Our Father, which art in  
heaven, hallowed be thy  
name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread, and forgive  
us our debts  
as we forgive  
our debtors. And  
lead us not into temptation, but  
deliver us from evil.)

Even though the protective prayer was soothing and reassuring, Masha still felt uneasy about the threatening storm. She was too close. She was due to deliver any day. Mixed emotions see-sawed back and forth on the sensitive fulcrum of her mind; the joy of having a baby was counter-balanced with the fear of losing it. As if to convince Masha in the positive, the fetus gave a hearty kick to her ribs. As it did so, Masha instantly felt a tightening in her muscles. She felt as if she were one big muscle in the grip of a vise, and she screamed.

"Oh, my God," said Ivan, who came rushing to Masha's side as she buckled over in pain. "What's wrong?"

"It's just a sharp pain in my womb," answered Masha as she tried to catch her breath.

"Maybe I should call Yuliana Lazarevskaya," proposed Ivan, holding Masha and slowly helping her to a narrow bed. Yuliana Lazarevskaya was Masha's Godmother, and she also was an experienced midwife who had delivered most of the children in the Harbin group. She was a widow; her husband had lost his life during a Soviet raid on their village.

"I think I'll be all right," stated Masha heroically. "I don't feel the pain any longer."

"Just to be sure I'll run over and get Yuliana," said Ivan as he hurried to the door. "I'll be back in a minute."

Masha lay down on the bed and placed her hands on her active womb. She had recovered from the initial shock, and the thought of ensuing labor left her mind. She just calmly thought of the baby wanting to be born, and she yearned to hold the newborn next to her breast. A warm glow radiated inside and around her as the thought and feeling of motherhood embraced her.

Within minutes Ivan was back with Yuliana following close at his heels. Yuliana crossed herself hurriedly when she entered the room, and she whispered a short prayer as she faced the ikon of St. Nikola in the corner of the room.

"I hear the little one is starting a storm of his own," said Yuliana in a jolly manner as she turned her attention to Masha. Her short round бабушка/babushka-type (like a grandmother) body approached the bed on which Masha lay.

"He sure is kicking up a storm," answered Masha in her own witty way.

"Let's hear what's going on inside there," said Yuliana as she pulled her flowery Russian scarf away from her ear and listened for the fetal heartbeat. After a minute of intense listening, the midwife lifted her head and smiled at Masha.

"You're going to have a strong, healthy baby," announced Yuliana. "The heartbeat is vigorous and energetic. The great moment hasn't arrived yet, though, and I would suggest you get plenty of sleep and rest. You don't want to overstrain yourself and the little one."

"Thank you, Крёстная/Hrostonaya (Godmother)," said Masha as she took Yuliana's hand and pulled her down to give her a kiss on the cheek.

"Call me any time you need me," responded Yuliana as she kissed Masha in return in typical Russian fashion on the cheek. "By the way," she said as an afterthought, "I brought out my weaving cards, shuttle, and cotton string the other day. I started weaving a special пояс/poyas (belt) for your little one. It should be ready by the time it decides to come out." She crossed herself again at the door and made a deep bow before she exited.

On the fifth day after the ship began its journey to San Paolo, Brazil, Masha began to feel excruciating pain, and Ivan rushed to call Yuliana again. The Spanish ship had just crossed the Tropic of Cancer at 30 degrees W. longitude. After Yuliana examined Masha and after the contractions subsided, it was discovered that Masha had been victimized by false labor.

"I knew it wasn't time," said Yuliana after the ordeal was over. "I haven't finished weaving the belt, yet."

As the ship approached the equator several days later, the waters became ominously calm. A great stillness lay over the ocean and not a wave was in sight. The heat became unbearable, for there wasn't any breeze around to cool the scorching bodies. It was hard to breathe in such heat. During the equally still night, the Milky Way covered the sky with myriads of stars. The bright star, Sirius, and the Southern Cross became more visible.

And then on the eleventh day, as the ship came close to the Tropic of Capricorn at 40 degrees W. longitude, a gentle breeze wafted its way across the waters and brought cool relief to the pilgrims who were on their way to a new world. It was at that moment that Masha's water bag broke and the real labor began. Ivan rushed for the third, and last, time to call Yuliana.

"I just finished the belt," announced Yuliana, walking through the door with a jubilant smile. "Just like I predicted." Masha tried to smile, but her desire to scream overcame her. The loud scream pierced the walls of the ship and resounded in all directions.

"Breathe nice and easy," ordered the experienced midwife when she saw that Masha was in no mood for humor.

"Ivan, get me a pan of hot water and some clean sheets and towels," commanded Yuliana, who always became authoritative whenever she took on the task of being a midwife.

Ivan obeyed without hesitation. When he returned with all the essential supplies, he was told to leave the room. Childbirth was a process that was sacred to Yuliana and, at

the same time, a private act between mother, child, and midwife. Only God and the Holy Saints were observant of and participants in the sacred mystery of birth. Yuliana called upon the Holy Company of Saints, Seraphim, Cherubim and Archangels to assist and guide her to bring about a speedy and safe delivery. Ivan waited in the corridor of the ship with the *nastoyatel* (elder) Simeon, who was called to the event in case of complications and the soul of the baby needed to be prayed for. It would be a fate worse than death to die unchristened, for the unchristened had no hope of ever seeing the face of God.

Five hours later, as the ship crossed the imaginary line called the Tropic of Capricorn, a baby boy was born. It was Thursday, December the 19th, and Masha was overjoyed in her heart that her dream had come true. Ivan was permitted to see the newborn boy only after Yuliana had finished all the clean up work. He brought a list of saints' names for Masha to choose a name from. Deep down in her heart Masha already knew what she wanted to name her baby.

"I got the *святси/svyatsi* (list of saints' names) from Simeon," said Ivan as he watched Masha nurse the baby. "I also found out which names belong to the eight-day limit and what some of the names mean, in case you want to know."

"Isn't he adorable," said Masha. Her gleaming eyes followed every move of the baby. She didn't pay much mind to what Ivan was prattling about. To her the sound of the baby suckling was more precious than any human words.

"He has my wide cheek bones," said Ivan.

"He's got my blue eyes," said Masha, finally looking at Ivan.

"One of the names I kind of like," said Ivan, trying to get back to his main interest at the moment, "is *Amvrosy*, which means godly and immortal in Greek. Another one is *Antony*, which means to gain in exchange for something. *Mina* means lunar; *Spiridon* means a round woven basket; *Evgeny* means of gentle birth; *Arseny* means manly; *Evstraty* means a good warrior; *Avksenty* means to increase; and *Orest* means exalted. Another one is *Daniel*, but it's a Jewish name. The

only other one is the saint's name for today, which is Nikolai for St. Nikola."

"What does the name Nikolai mean?" asked Masha when she finally heard the name she had been waiting for.

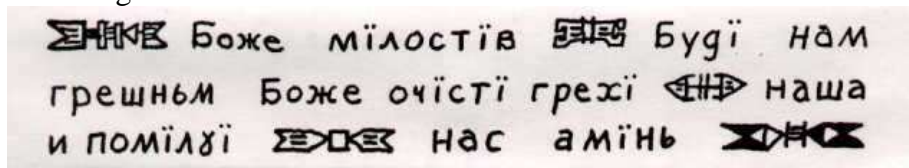
"It means побеждающий народ/pobezhdayushchiy narod (victorious people)," answered Ivan, reading from his list. "It's a good Russian name."

"That's the name I like best," said Masha. "He should bear the name for the day he was born on."

"I kind of like the sound of Kolya, too," said Ivan, using the diminutive form of the name.

Yuliana later came to check on the mother and child. She also brought the finished молитвенный пояс/molitveniy poyas (prayer belt), which had a prayer woven into the fabric of the five-colored belt. Yuliana proudly unrolled the belt and displayed it on the bed next to the baby. Two purple and turquoise tassels adorned the ends of the belt, which was almost twice the length of the baby. Purple Church Slavonic letters and purple geometric designs were interwoven with a turquoise-blue background down the center of the belt. Along the edges of the inch wide belt were three narrow bands of yellow, white, and olive-green; the yellow bands were on the inside, on both sides of the center, the white in between, and the olive-green on the outside border.

Yuliana crossed herself and then she read the prayer on the belt. The prayer was interspersed with graphic designs in the following manner:



"Bozhe milostiv buddi nam greshnim Bozhe ochisti grehi nasha e pomilui nas amin"

(God be merciful to us sinners God cleanse our sins and pardon us Amen)

Afterwards, Yuliana kissed the baby on the forehead and said, "This is for you to wear for protection and safekeeping for the rest of your days on earth."

"It's such a lovely belt," complimented Masha. She picked it up and inspected the artistic handiwork. When she turned it over to look at the back side, the colors reversed; the purple changed to turquoise, and the turquoise changed to purple. Masha turned it over several times and showed Ivan the optical illusion, for from one point of view it appeared that the background was sky-blue and the foreground was purple, whereas from the opposite point of view it was possible to visualize a purple background with blue designs and letters.

"I'll make him a name belt when he grows up," added Yuliana. "Have you chosen a name, yet?"

"Yes, we have," admitted Masha without hesitation. "We want to call him Nikolai."

"What a blessed name!" exclaimed Yuliana. "Our patron saint is to be honored in your family. What a privilege!"

"He will have to live up to a great saint's name," remarked Ivan. "The holy Archbishop of Myra helped the poor, and he saved sailors by calming stormy seas with his prayers."

"He did much more than just that," commented Yuliana. "He built houses for travelers and hospitals for the sick and needy. He was always performing charitable deeds. The charitable deed I enjoyed hearing about during services for St. Nikola was the one about the three bags of gold that he gave as a gift to three impoverished sisters secretly at night in order to save them from a life of shame."

"He performed miracles, too, didn't he?" asked Masha, wanting to find out more about the patron saint now that her baby was going to carry his name.

"The most well-known miracle," said Yuliana, who seemed to be an authority on the compassionate saint, "was when he traveled to the Holy Land where Hristos was born, crucified and resurrected. A storm arose at sea, and he gathered the people together to pray for their safety. Immediately the storm stopped, and the people claimed it was because of his prayers."

"I heard somewhere that he was one of the Fathers of the church summoned to the First Ecumenical Synod in Nicea in 325 A.D. by Emperor Constantine," said Ivan. "He helped establish the teaching that the Son is of the same essence as the Father, as we are taught in our исповедание православныя веры/ispovedaniye pravoslavniya veri (profession of orthodox faith)."

"What I learned most from his exemplary life," said Yuliana, as the discussion continued to unfold in scope, "was his practice of love and charity in a true fatherly way. His favorite teaching was taken from the life of Hristos: 'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me . . . Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.'"

The memory of St. Nikola began to fade in Masha's mind as she began thinking of the next stage in her baby's life--the christening.

"When will we be able to get the nastoyatel (minister) to perform the christening?" asked Masha, turning her face away from the sleeping baby at her breast and looking up at her husband.

"I talked with Simeon," said Ivan, "and he assured me that he would perform the ceremony even if we aren't of the Sinkiang group. I explained to him that our new nastoyatel (elder) was supposed to leave on a train soon after we left; but we didn't hear from him. Simeon said this Sunday would be the best day. He mentioned that there was a very small holyday on Tuesday in memory of the miracle-worker Spiridon, and we could do it then if we so desired."

"I'd rather do it on Sunday," decided Masha.

"Simeon read from his устав/ustav (book of rules) that Tuesday is the day when the sun returns from winter to summer; that's when the day becomes longer and the night shorter," said Ivan.

"I still prefer Sunday," said Masha, finalizing the decision-making process. Ivan said no more.

On the twelfth day, the ship entered the port of Santos, Brazil. The Old Believers were met by a delegate from the World Council of Churches who had already arranged their immediate transportation by cable railway to Sao Paulo. There they were to stay for several days, and then they would be transported to their new home in Ponta Grossa, which was about 250 miles southwest of Sao Paulo.

On Sunday, a small group gathered together for the christening ceremony in a small hotel room in the heart of Sao Paulo. Simeon was the nastoyatel (minister) who performed the ceremony in his calf-length black monk's robe. He dipped the brown-haired head and naked body of the awakened baby into a large pan of water three times: Once in the name of the Father, the second time in the name of the Son, and the third time in the name of the Holy Spirit. Then he prayed over the baby. During the liturgical prayer he officially named the crying child Nikolai, linking him with the heavenly patron saint. After establishing the child's entry into the unity of the Church--on earth as it is in heaven--the nastoyatel made the sign of the blessed holy cross of protection over the wide-eyed infant, and then he took a small lead cross on a thong and hung it around the resisting neck of the screaming child. He gladly handed the protesting baby into the hands of the waiting Godfather, whose blessing was next in order.

The Godparent, who was chosen for the solemn occasion, was Vasily Velikov, who had become very close friends with Ivan and Masha ever since they met in Hong Kong. The Godfather had agreed to the task of providing spiritual and religious instruction to the child whenever needed during their journey through life together. He was linked to the child not in a biological or economical way, but in a spiritual and religious way; while Ivan and Masha were the physical parents, Vasily was the spiritual parent. Zinaida, Vasily's wife, had hastily cross-stitched a tiny tunic-like shirt for the newborn to wear after the ceremony, and she proceeded to dress the twisting body.



"Вот смотри какой он бойкий/Vot smotri kakoy on boykiy," (Will you look at that lively little fellow) laughed Vasily as the mood of the occasion changed from the solemn to the festive.

"He probably doesn't want you to hang all those cherries around his neck," observed Yuliana, who had received a special invitation from Masha.

Zinaida struggled for a couple of minutes with the waving arms, and then she finally managed to fit the small shiny light-blue silk рубашка/rubashka (small shirt) over the child's head and arms. The five pairs of cherries on the front panel each had a yellow flower and six green leaves to make a whole unit. The only noticeable difference in each unit was the position of the yellow flower, which alternated from left to right on the stem as the eye roved up and down. There were also eight tiny cherries cross-stitched around the circular collar. All in all, the artistic stitch work looked like a fruitful cherry tree done in miniature.

"And here's something for the head," said Vasily, bringing out a simple white bonnet that had been passed down in his family. It showed little sign of wear and tear. It had been well preserved.

"Now let's see how this пояс/poyas (belt) fits," proceeded Yuliana. It was her turn to take part in the traditional dressing festival after the baptismal ceremony. She crossed herself, then she read the prayer on the belt, and finally she wrapped the belt around the waist of the tired baby. She tied the belt in a bow at the back near the bottom of the spine. The sleepy infant squirmed a little at first as it felt the grip of the constricting cord, but then he slipped gently into the encircling arms of the waiting mother and was asleep in a wink.

"Now he looks like a real Russian Old Believer," commented Ivan in a tone of fatherly pride.

"His cross should be tucked inside the shirt," said Simeon, who had up till now quietly observed the festivities without comment. He knew that his role was to perform only the liturgical part for the child, and the rest was in the hands of

the parents. But he always was on the look-out for any violation of church law.

Masha took the common one-inch cross in her hand and was about to tuck it back behind the shirt, when she noticed something peculiar on the back side of the cross where the prayer was usually inscribed.

"This prayer looks a little different," said Masha, who recognized Church Slavonic letters enough to notice a variation from her own cross that she wore around her neck.

"I forgot to tell you about the inscription," apologized Simeon. "I was going to read it for you, but the infant started screaming. I made it myself back in Kulzha, where I had the instruments and the mold to pour the lead into. The inscription is taken from a holy book, and it reads:

Крес хранител всей селеннам/Kres hranityel vsey selenam  
Крес Красота церковная/Kres krasota tserkovnaya  
Крес Ангелам слав/Kres Angelam slav  
Крес бесям язва/Kres besyam yazva.' "  
(The Cross is the Protector of all the world  
The Cross is the Beauty of the Church  
The Cross is glorious to the Angels  
The Cross is a plague to the demons)

"That's a marvelous prayer," spoke up Vasily contemplatively. "It really expresses the various meanings of the cross."

"I'm sure Kolya will be proud to wear it," said Masha. She gave a sign that it was nursing time, and the gathering at once began to disperse.

Several days later the Old Believers finally arrived at their destination--Ponta Grossa, "the Princess of the Grasslands." There was free land provided for them about eight miles from the city of Ponta Grossa, which was in the state of Parana, "Land of Pines." There was also assistance given to them with the farming of the land by their sponsors, the World Council of Churches. They set up their separate

villages near each other, the Sinziantsi from Sinkiang sticking together in their established family groups, and the Harbintsi from Harbin forming their own посёлки/posyolki (little villages) of families and their relatives. Blood lines seemed to run thicker than religious systems, and each stuck to their own kind in spite of mutual beliefs. Eventually, more boatloads of Old Believers came and more villages were set up.

And so four long years of farming and struggling for survival passed, and the Old Believers became more discontent with their life in poverty-stricken Brazil. Daily the men would come home either from the rice and watermelon fields or from the market places in Ponta Grossa, and they would complain to their wives about the harvest that had been washed away by torrents of rain or about the glutted market and the low prices that were paid for the surplus harvest. Corrupt tax collectors roamed like bandits upon the highways and the byways, and things went from bad to worse. The voices of the people appealed both to the saints in the high heaven and to the nations of the earth for help.

Someone up there in the high heaven must have been looking out for the Old Believers, for in 1962 an organization called the Tolstoy Foundation in New York caught wind of the plight of the Old Believers in Brazil. The organization had taken its name from the great Russian novelist Lev Tolstoy, who had helped many needy people during his life on earth in an attempt to express the true Christian spirit of love and brotherhood.

And so it came to pass that the Tolstoy Foundation agreed to sponsor the majority of the Old Believers in a move to the United States of America. Ivan and several others in his group from Harbin were able to pay at least part of their plane fare and still have a small savings to begin life in America. The group from Sinkiang also managed to make the move, in spite of heavy losses at the marketplace. Some managed to move in later years. Some were so poor that they couldn't get on their feet to move. Others were too wealthy to want to move.

Russian Old Believer Belt



## Chapter 6 -- "The Birth of Hristos (Christ)"

"He has grown up to be a big boy," said Masha, watching Nikolai run up the ramp into the modern Boeing 707 intercontinental jetliner.

"You can see how excited he is about going to America," said Ivan, running to catch up with the little sprinter.

"Don't let him get too far ahead," called Masha. She watched her husband pursue young Nikolai. She wobbled slowly behind, trying to carry the new load that was forming inside her. It was five years since she had Nikolai, and she was due to have another baby within several months.

"Kolya, stay with us," said Masha, reprimanding her boy for running ahead. "Hold him by the hand, Ivan," she said to her husband.

Together the family of three boarded the plane and took their assigned seats. They buckled their seat belts and crossed themselves with a silent prayer to the Богородица/Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) for protection. Then the jet plane lifted its wings and soared over the clouds into the bright blue sky.

"We're finally going to America," said Masha excitedly. Her heartbeat slowed down and her tightened muscles relaxed as the jet airliner reached the cruising altitude of 33,000 feet.

"We waited long enough for this moment," answered Ivan. He let go of Masha's relaxed hand, and then he leaned over Nikolai's shoulder to watch the scenery below.

"Что ты видишь/Shto ti vityesh?" (What do you see?) asked Ivan as his bushy beard brushed against Nikolai's ear. Nikolai had his eyes glued to the small oval window during the entire take-off and flight through the clouds. Now, as the clouds started to thin out, he was excitedly calling out some of the geographical landmarks that he was observing.

"There's a big river down there and a lot of green trees," exclaimed Nikolai, who had never seen anything from such a height before.

"That must be the jungle you're seeing," responded Ivan. "Do you see any mountains?"

"Not yet," answered Nikolai, who was crowding for position at the window with his dad.

"We should be in America by midnight," interjected Masha, who was beginning to show signs of weariness. "I think I'll take a nap."

Masha pushed the button to put the reclining seat into a comfortable sleeping position and soon she was fast asleep. Her mind fantasized several images of what America would be like before the screen of her mind flickered and went blank. She felt more at ease now that their wilderness experience in Brazil was over.

Ivan sat back in his chair and thought of the friends he had left behind in Brazil. Vasily and his family had stayed until they could pay off some of their debts to the bank and be free to go. Ivan's other friend, Antip Svyatogorov, had been more fortunate; Antip had saved his rice during the surplus season and sold it to the market when the demand and the price went back up. In such a manner Antip was able to accumulate more wealth than his fellow Old Believers and competitors. He was one of the first to head for the state called Oregon, which was the name on the lips of a boatload of Old Believers who had come via Los Angeles back in 1959 and who had been told by Russian Molokans in the Los Angeles area that Oregon was the place to get rich in farming berries.

"Тятя/Tyatya," (Daddy) abruptly said Nikolai, snapping Ivan out of his reverie. "What is America like?"

"It has a lot of big cities, like Sao Paulo," answered Ivan. He was amazed at his son's sophisticated question. "People in American have a lot of money. They have their own house and car, and they get to go anywhere they want to."

"Will we have our own car, too?" asked Nikolai, whose starry-blue eyes lit up with the thought of speeding down the road in a fast car.

"Yes, we will," answered Ivan confidently.

Nikolai's face beamed, and he threw his arms around his dad's neck as if to say "thank you." He had heard what he wanted to hear, and that made him the happiest boy in the world. He imagined himself sitting tall beside his father and zooming down the highway and around curves.

"But you have to learn your Азбука/Azbuka (Primer) first before you can ride in the car," said Ivan with a smile on his face. He knew his son was ready to learn to read the holy books like he had when he was a boy. Now he had something to motivate him with--the thought of riding in a car.

"How much of the Азбука/Azbuka (Primer) do I have to learn before I can ride in the car?" bargained Nikolai.

"As soon as you learn all the letters of the alphabet and you memorize special church words for each letter of the alphabet," said Ivan. He made the deal and then added, "As soon as you finish that, then I'll buy a car and take you for a ride. But then you'll have to promise to learn to read all the prayers in the Азбука/Azbuka (Primer)."

"All right," said Nikolai somewhat reluctantly. He turned his face back to the oval window and kept his eyes on the shifting terrain below. He thought about all the hard work he would have to do before he could ride in the car. That thought made him feel kind of sad. With that thought on his mind he too drifted off to sleep.

By midnight the plane arrived at the Portland Airport as scheduled. The sleepy family walked down the ramp and out to the terminal. Ivan had been given a phone number to call when he arrived, and so he phoned Antip's number and waited.

"Кто говорит/Kto govorit?" (Who's speaking?) asked a sleepy masculine voice.

"This is me, Ivan," responded Ivan.

"Ivan Bogolubov?" asked the surprised voice.

"Да/Da (Yes), it is I," answered Ivan.

"Where are you?" asked the voice.

"At the airport, waiting for you," said Ivan, who had by now recognized Antip's voice. It sounded so different over the telephone.

"I'll be right there in about an hour," said Antip. "You wait by the front door and I'll drive up for you. I have a surprise for you. Бог будь с тобой/Bog bud' s toboy. (God be with you.)"

Ivan was surprised to hear that his friend was already driving a car. It was only a year ago that Antip had made the move to America. He wondered what the surprise was that Antip had hurriedly mentioned before he hung up the telephone. Ivan thought it might be a new car that Antip wanted to show-off.

Within an hour Antip drove up in a 1957 blue Chevrolet. Antip honked the horn and Ivan picked up his two big bags of luggage and headed for the car with Masha and Nikolai trailing behind. In the car with Antip was an old friend of Ivan's from China.

"Andrey Ribrov!" exclaimed Ivan when he finally got close enough to the car to make out his old friend's face.

"Ivan Bogolubov! My dear friend!" exclaimed Andrey as he opened the car door and stepped out to embrace his friend in the Russian style. The circle of friendship had been reestablished once again.

"How did you get to America?" asked Ivan. "And when did you come here?"

Antip loaded the luggage in the trunk while Masha and Nikolai climbed in the back seat with Ivan. Ivan sat behind Andrey as Andrey began his story.

"Did you hear of the group that landed in Los Angeles on the way to Brazil?" asked Andrey.

"Yes, we did," answered Ivan. "That's the group that told us about Woodburn, Oregon. They built their own village not too far from ours."

"Well," continued Andrey. "When I talked with a Molokan man named Moisey Bogdanov, who happened to be visiting his relatives in Los Angeles, he told me that he would take me to Oregon and he would sign sponsorship



papers for me if I agreed to help him work on his berry farm for the summer. I told him I'd be glad to. So we stayed with Moisey, and he took me and my family to the immigration office to file all the necessary papers."

"Did Paraskeva have some children?" asked Masha when she heard Andrey mention the word family. The last time Masha saw Paraskeva was back in Harbin, and Paraskeva was still childless.

"Oh, excuse me, I forgot to tell you," apologized Andrey, turning his attention to Masha and her son Nikolai. "I've got one daughter named Haritina, who was born in China less than a year after you left. And I have two fine boys a few years younger than your boy. The older one is called Prokopy; he was born in Hong Kong while we were waiting for a ship. The younger one is called Nestor. Nestor was born in Woodburn in 1961."

"So he's the first Old Believer born in America," commented Masha.

"I believe so," remarked Andrey. "I haven't heard of any other Old Believers that had children here, yet. In fact, besides myself, Antip was one of the first of our Old Believers to come to Oregon. He came last year about this same time."

"That's right," affirmed Antip, who had been busy driving through the city of Portland and now was making a turn to enter Interstate Highway 5. "That's when he helped me find a small berry farm with a small house on it. It had three small bedrooms and a nice kitchen for my wife. I added a small tool shack to the side of the house by the one car garage. It was a lot better than that hut on stilts that we had in Brazil."

"Anyway, getting back to my story," interjected Andrey, who turned his attention back to his friend Ivan. "You remember that house I had in China?" Ivan nodded his head affirmatively. "I sold it for a good price and I managed to take most of the money out of the country. So when the official in the immigration office saw that I was able to bring a substantial sum of money into the American economy and at the same time not be a hardship to a sponsor, she stamped

my papers with the seal of approval and they accepted me into the United States."

"You sly businessman," remarked Ivan. "You always have a way of making money work for you."

"That's the only way to get ahead in this world," admitted Andrey. "Перед богом став свечку, перед судьей— мешок/Pered Bogom stav svechku, pered soodyoy--meshok.' (Before God you should place a candle, but before a judge--a bag). That's what our пословица/poslovitsa (proverb) says. And you know that a bag means a bag of money, and the judge is any government official."

"That's so true," concurred Antip. He was driving his sturdy and solid car 65 miles per hour down the freeway toward Woodburn. Nikolai was standing up in the back and looking over Antip's shoulder as the Chevrolet's eight-cylinder motor moved the car speedily down the road. He had never seen a car go so fast.

"And so my sponsor Moisey Bogdanov brought me to this rich Willamette River valley and showed me all the rich farm land," proceeded Andrey. "He helped me find a twenty acre berry farm with a beautiful home, and in the meantime I helped him on his farm. He was a good and friendly man. His children had grown up and had married, and he was starting to get bald. His children were hardly Russian anymore. They spoke more English than Russian, and they had forgotten many of the old Russian ways."

"Tell Ivan about the church they go to," said Antip. Andrey had told Antip about his experience in the Molokan church.

"Moisey invited me to come to his church one Sunday," began Andrey, obliging his friends. "He begged me to visit at least once. I told him our holy books warn us about listening to heretical teachings and about visiting heretical churches. He insisted, however, and I agreed to go just once. When I entered their church I was shocked. It didn't look like a church at all. There were no holy ikons and no candles burning to honor the saints, Hristos and the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). Then the minister started talking about the

Bible and reading: 'Как новорожденные младенцы, возлюбите чистое словесное молоко, дабы от него возрасти вам во спасение/Kak novorozhdyoniye mladyentsi, vozlyubitye chistoye slovesnoye moloko, dabi ot nego bozrasti vam vo spaseniye.' (As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby into salvation.) Then someone would come in the door and everyone would stand up. The minister would stop talking and everyone would say, "Спаси, Господи/Spasi, Gospodi." (Save us, Lord.) This happened every time someone walked through the door. I told myself that was the first and last time I was entering into their 'house of prayer'; that's what they call it."

"That's not all," said Antip. "One time this Moisey came to my house to get acquainted, and he started preaching to me about Иисус/Iesous. I kindly showed him our holy books, where the name Исусь/Isous was spelled differently than their Иисус/Iesous. I explained to him that their Iesous was different than our Isous. 'What? Different? How can that be?' he asked me. 'Your Iesous is a different god, a Latinized god,' I told him, 'whereas our Isous is the savior handed down to us from old Slavonic church books and chronicles.' 'But Iesous is taken from the Greek form Iesous, which means healer,' said Moisey, who seemed to be very knowledgeable in the Scriptures. 'We have proof from St. Dimitry of Rostov in his holy book "Розыск/Rosisk" (Inquiry) that Isous and Iesous mean two different persons,' I told him. He said, 'You probably don't know that from antiquity the name of the savior had been figured by the number 888, which is summed up in the name Iesous.' 'We don't follow that teaching,' I said. 'And another thing,' said Moisey before we parted company, 'the first two letters of the name of Iesous have a sacred mystery hidden in them, for in the Greek I=10 and n=8.' That was the end of our discussion, for I wasn't about to hear any more of his heretical teachings."

"I think that's when Moisey found out for certain that he couldn't convert us to his belief," said Andrey, "and so he quit trying after that."

"So where do you hold your church services?" asked Ivan. He had wanted to ask that question ever since Andrey mentioned the Molokan church.

"In my house," answered Andrey. "That's how everyone used to do it in China--find the biggest house and have the church services there. This time I happen to have the biggest house with the largest living room you've ever seen. You'll see it tonight."

"Tonight?" asked Ivan in a surprised tone.

"I've arranged with my wife, Paraskeva, to take you and your family into our house until we can find you a place to live," stated Andrey. "She just had the house cleaned in preparation for Рождество Христово/Pozhdyestvo Hristovo (Christmas)."

"I don't know what to say," said Ivan as he tried to hold back the tears of joy and gratitude. "All I can say is, you're a great friend. 'Спаси Христос/Spasi Hristos' (Save us Hristos)." He used the phrase Spasi Hristos (Save us Hristos) as a sign of gratitude instead of saying спасибо/spasibo (thank you). [Spasibo is the shortened form of 'Спаси Бог/Spasi Bog', which means 'Save us God.' Spasi Hristos is the form used because salvation is achieved through Hristos.]

Antip slowed down as he came to the Woodburn-St.Paul exit. Then he turned east towards Woodburn. He drove through the small town and headed towards the outskirts of town across highway 99E. Within three miles from the crossroads of 99E, the old Pacific highway, and connecting highway 214, the car came to a turn-off and drove down a dirt road to Andrey's house. It was dark and quiet as the car stopped outside the two-car garage.

Paraskeva turned on the porch light when she heard the car drive up. Ivan and Masha entered the house and bowed toward the east corner of the large living room where an ikon of the Bogoroditsa (Madonna) and Christ-child was adorned with surrounding embroidered curtains. The guests bowed

toward the hosts with the greeting, "Здоров живёте/Zdorov zhiviyotye" (Live in good health), and the hosts bowed toward the guests with the response, "Милости просим/Milosti prosim" (We ask for mercy).

The host, Andrey, brought in the luggage into the family room and showed Ivan the sofa-bed that was already set up for them to sleep on. The hide-away-bed was conveniently set up in the corner of the spacious family room, which was used as a guest room whenever the need arose. The hostess, Paraskeva, showed Masha the second bathroom and other features of the house so that Masha wouldn't get lost in the roomy house during the night. Then she left the tired Masha on her own.

Masha went to sleep with young Nikolai beside her while her husband Ivan talked with Andrey into the dewy hours of the new day.

It was the day before the Russian Christmas. In the evening there would be a service in preparation for the midnight service, which would celebrate the birth of Christ with candle lights. The midnight service would coincide with the old style Christmas, which would be on Tuesday, January the 7th (13 days later than the Christmas observed by the western world).

It was the year 1964, and to Masha and Ivan it meant the birth of a new life. For Masha it was a dream finally come true. America was all that she had ever imagined it would be. She wished for a house just like her friend Paraskeva had. Nikolai wished his dad would get a car just like Antip's. Ivan wished that America would be just as good to him as it had been to his friends.

At the midnight service, the three families that had been brought together by the will of God joined their voices together to chant the liturgy to the Blessed Virgin for having given birth to the Christ-child, who was to restore to mankind the original image of eternal life which existed before the fall of Adam. The liturgy to all the saints and heavenly hosts was chanted, and the petition "Молите Бога о нас грешных/Molitye Boga o nas greshnikh" (Pray to God

for us sinners) was intoned repeatedly as a refrain. The faithful prayed, "The Lord has sent redemption to His people." Then the candles were lit to celebrate the beginning of the feast of the Nativity of Christ and the end of the 40-day period of fasting.

The small group joyously chanted in the Gregorian-chant style as the light of day began to ascend on the eastern horizon: "Рождество твое Христе Боже наш, возсия мирови свет разума: в нем бо звездам служащий звездою учахуся, тебе кланяются солнцу правды, и тебе водят с высоты востока: Господи, слава тебе./Rozhdyestvo tvoyo Hristye Bozhe nash, vozsiya mirovi svet razuma: v nyom bo zvezdam sluzhashchiy zvezdoyu uchahucya, tebye klanyatisya solntsu pravdi, e tebye vedyeti s visoti vostoka: Gospodi slava tebye." (Thy Birth, O Christ our God, rose upon the world as the light of knowledge: for through it those who had adored the stars were taught by a star to worship thee, the sun of righteousness, and to know thee, the dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory to thee.)

## CANDLE



## Chapter 7 -- "Synod of the Mother of God"

When the Tuesday morning service commemorating the Nativity of Christ was finished, the tired worshippers were about to disband when all of a sudden tiny five-year-old Haritina shouted from the living room window, "It's snowing!"

Andrey and his wife Paraskeva rushed to the window to see if their daughter was telling the truth. Ivan and Masha followed to see what the excitement was all about. Antip and his wife Evgenia joined the crowd at the wide scenic window. The snow was coming down in flurries, and it was sticking to the cold January ground. A thin white carpet was laid over the earth as if to commemorate the pure Virgin Birth of the Redeemer of all Mankind.

"That's the first time it snowed this winter," announced Andrey, whose eyes reflected the white, glistening snow.

"It's probably the first and last time for this year," commented his wife, Paraskeva.

"Ivan brought us this blessing," speculated Antip.

"I was just thinking the same thing," said Masha, amazed at the coincidence. "I was thinking that the snow is welcoming us to Oregon and to a new life in America."

"Mama," yelled Nikolai, who had come to life with the rest of the children. "May we go outside to play with the snow?"

"Can we go make человека из снега/cheloveka iz snyega (a man out of snow)," begged Haritina, pulling at her mother's calf-length dress.

"Kolya will get a cold," said Ivan. "His lungs are weak."

"Пускай/Puskaiy," (let them) said Andrey. "It only snows once or twice a year here, in what some call the 'banana belt'. At least let the children have some fun."

The mothers dressed the children in warm clothes, and within minutes the children were scraping up the soft fluffy snow with their mittens and making snowballs. The night sky slowly changed to day and the hidden sun rose upon the

eastern horizon. The white snow silently floated to the outstretched hands of the children, who were trying to catch the crunchy flakes and savor the pure watery taste in their mouths.

The mothers and fathers watched the children frolic in the thickening snow; they received vicarious pleasure by watching, for in so doing they were remembering their own childhood. The days of innocence and irresponsibility seemed to be like paradise in comparison to the adult task of providing food and shelter for the family. The children were care-free, playful, and had no thought for tomorrow, while the adults were constantly anxious about work and always worried about what the future had in store for them.

The heavenly snow seemed to cover all the earth and all the homes with one gigantic blanket of forgetfulness and rest. It was on snowy days that most people just wanted to sit home by a warm fire and watch the earth fill up with whiteness. Andrey went out to the patio to get an armful of alder wood for the fire. He had a blazing fire sparkling in no time at all. The men gathered around the warm fire in the brick fireplace and swapped stories about China and Brazil and made plans for a fishing trip to the coast, while the women gathered around the stove in the kitchen and talked about their growing children.

It turned out to be an all day affair at Andrey's house. Everyone was having a good time and no one wanted to stop the festivities. The women spent all day baking and cooking Russian bread, all sorts of закуски/zakuski (sweet pastry for snacks), котлеты/kotlety (cutlets), лапша/lapsha (vermicelli), and пирошки/piroshki (turnovers with meat filling). Andrey brought out his fermented брара/braga (a home-brewed wine made from berries) and toasted his friends with the end of the 40-day Christmas fast and the beginning of the great feast, which would continue in one form or another until the next fasting period. Meat and milk products, which were prohibited during the Christmas fast in preparation for the new birth, were once again permitted by



the Устав/Ustav (book of rules), which regulated the daily dietary life of the Old Believer.

The children had finished making a Снегурочка /Snegurochka (Snow-Maiden) and a Дед Мороз/Dyed Moroz (Grandfather Winter) by mid-morning, and they excitedly rushed into the warm house to tell their parents about their four-feet tall creations. The dwarf-sized figures stood like two guards in the front yard, and their arms-made-from-birch-branches dangled below their girdled waist. Red stones were set in their eye sockets, and carrots were taken from the refrigerator to make the nose. Prokopy found an old black Russian hat that his father Andrey had thrown out in the garage, and Haritina found an old flowery Russian scarf. Old-man Winter and the Snow-Maiden were crowned with the headgear, and they took on a personality distinctly Russian.

By evening it was time to observe a minor holyday in remembrance of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God); it was one of the numerous days during the church calendar year that the Bogoroditsa was commemorated. There were also two ikons of the Bogoroditsa that were especially important to the Russians because of the Blessed Virgin's miraculous appearance on Russian soil; they were "Our Lady of Vladimir" and "Our Lady of Kazan." As "Our Lady of Vladimir," she was the embodiment of умиление/umileniye (motherly tenderness); as "Our Lady of Kazan," she was the Heavenly Queen.

Masha was so tired and exhausted by the festivities of the previous day that by the time the evening service for the Mother of God came around, she was hardly conscious of her mechanical prayers and bowings. She was slowly losing consciousness by the time the service ended; her head nodded constantly during the service, and she barely stood on her feet. Several times she thought she was going to fall, but Paraskeva stood by her side and supported her with her right shoulder during Masha's weak moments.

Masha was thankful when she finally slumped down on the hide-away-bed and fell into a sound sleep. Ivan covered

her with a goose-feather blanket and kissed her good-night on the cheek.

It was exactly 1:30 A.M. when Masha awoke with a loud "Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui" (Lord, have mercy) that startled Ivan and brought him instantly to her side.

"What's wrong?" asked Ivan as he tried to calm down his sobbing wife.

"I just had a terrible dream," sobbed Masha. Her whole body seemed to vibrate and tremble as if she had just seen a ghost.

"What did you see in your dream?" asked Ivan. He held his shaking wife in his arms and tried to comfort her and bring her back to herself.

"I was in a strange world where people were tortured for their sins," began Masha. Her eyes gazed into the far distance as she tried to recall the details of the overpowering dream. "I remember seeing a lady in white clothes coming to me out of the sky and saying to me, 'Come and see the souls that have suffered upon the face of the earth and in the fire.' She was wearing a very brilliant crown on her head and a golden halo encircled her head. She looked like the Blessed Virgin, Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), for she had a sad and sorrowful look on her face. Then she took me by the hand and led me to the south where the land was burning from the heat of the sun. She said to me: 'This land is being scorched with famine because of the sins of the people.' She pointed to a river of fire which was full of snakes. A dragon reared its head out of the waters. She said: 'The people you see in the river of fire are those tortured by fire and snakes for sins of lechery, cannibalism, and murder, for they sinned against the flesh.' Then I saw a man hanging by one foot and I asked the Holy Virgin what he was being punished for. She replied: 'He is devoured eternally by worms, for he sold his soul for silver and gold, and he stepped all over people for filthy lucre.' Then I saw a woman hanging by her tongue and I asked the Holy Virgin: 'What has she done wrong?' And the Holy Virgin answered, 'This woman used to say evil words

and gossiped, and now her tongue has brought her to eternal ruin and damnation . . .'

"Then the Blessed Virgin lifted me out of the fiery region, and I felt like I was flying northward through a dark tunnel. As we flew through the dismal darkness, I heard voices that pierced my heart like arrows. And for the first time during this strange dream, I wanted to cry. I asked the Blessed Virgin, 'Whose voices are those?' She answered, 'Those are the voices crying out in the darkness to gods made out of wood and stone. They did not believe in the Holy Trinity; instead they called upon the sun and the moon and the earth and the water and worshipped them as gods.' And then a voice called out, 'Blessed One! Come nearer so we can see light, for we have not seen light for ages.' And I wept when I heard the plaintive voice. Then the Blessed Virgin asked the voice, 'Why did you refuse to believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?' The distant voice answered with clenched teeth, 'We suffered from pride in ourselves, and we gloried in our own achievements, forgetting from whom came our life, breath and spirit. We did not even want to honor you, Blessed One, nor acknowledge that from you was born the Lord Isous Hristos, who, having come in the flesh, has redeemed the world from sin.' Then the Blessed Virgin reprimanded the voice coming from the darkness, saying, 'Why did you live in error? Did you not know that all creation honors me and my son?'

"And with those words the Blessed Virgin left the voice in utter darkness again, and we continued north until we came to a fiery cloud filled with people. 'These are the people who laid around in bed during holydays and did not attend church,' spoke the Holy Virgin. 'And the ones who refused to say their prayers are also there.' I turned my face from the fiery cloud, for I remembered skipping church and prayers during some of the holydays.

"Then we sailed eastward in a boat upon the waves of a wide river, and it appeared as if the water was boiling. In the water were heads of men and women bobbing up and down like corks, and they appeared to be drowning. The men and

women were hardly able to say 'Господи помилуй/Gospodi pomilui' (Lord, be merciful) before another wave of boiling water would pull them down below the surface of the river.

"And then I saw a host of angels and saints watching over the sinners and praying in unison: 'Holy, Holy, Holy. Holy God and holy Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), we praise you and the Son of God born of you. Rejoice, Source of Light Eternal; rejoice, giver of birth to the Son, the Adam of old, creator of ages and redeemer of those that pray to you. Intercede for the sinners, and pray to our Lord for the entire world.'

"And suddenly the Holy Virgin spoke in a loud voice: 'God have mercy upon them.' And the waves on the waters ceased and were still. Then the Holy Virgin asked the host of angels about the sinners in the boiling waters, and she was told that the Jews who tormented and crucified her Son were tormented there in like manner. The Holy Virgin turned away from that place, and the boiling waves once again drowned the sinners in a perpetual never-ending motion.

"Then the Blessed Virgin led me westward and showed me the intercession of the saints, and I heard the never ceasing prayer 'Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui' (Lord, have mercy). She told me: 'Because of the intercession of the saints I will continue to intercede for all mankind, to bring their prayers to my Son, the Light of the World, and to plead for mercy until the sinners repent of their sins and keep the commandments that were given to them by my Son.'

"At those words I cried out, 'Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui' (Lord, have mercy), and that's when I woke up." Masha ended her account of her dream and fell into a long silence. She contemplated the meaning of her dream for many days, but she told Ivan not to mention the dream to anyone else.



Ікѡна Пресвѣтѣи Бѣгородницы Почаевскіѣ.

## Chapter 8 -- "Circumcision of Hristos (Christ)"

For several days Masha was unable to forget the dream she had of the Bogoroditsa (in the literal sense Bogoroditsa is translatable as "she who gave birth to God") and her trip through the regions of torment. The images of suffering humanity made her weep copious tears during her prayers in the morning hours and at night. She used her special Bogoroditsa лестовка/lestovka (rosary) during her prayers.

The lestovka (rosary) was divided into 15 sections, and in each section were ten thin half-inch wide tufts of sturdy black fabric. Each section was partitioned off from the next section by a larger round tuft with a round 3/8" cork inserted to make the tuft firm. Tiny corks were also inserted into the smaller 150 tufts to give it a sturdy look and to make the lestovka (rosary) durable.

Instead of counting beads to keep track of a prescribed number of prayers for any occasion, the Old Believers used a hand-made lestovka (rosary) of thick polyester fiber to perform the sacred ritual of repetitious prayer.

A decorative triangular-shaped bell made of colorful cloth hung on the end of the lestovka (rosary); a second bell seemed to hang from the top bell, and it was hidden at the top and visible on the bottom. The bell-shaped decoration seemed to serve as a reminder that the hours were marked off by the continuous sound of prayer.

The prayer that Masha recited as she fingered (перечистовать/perechistovat') her lestovka with the left hand and crossed herself with the right hand was the prayer to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God):

“Богородице Дево радуйся обрадованная Мария  
Господь с тобою, благословена ты в женах  
и благословен плод чрева твоего,  
яко родила еси Христа Спаса  
Избавителя душам вашим.”  
(Holy Virgin Mother of God joyful Mary,  
The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb  
As you gave birth to Hristos the Savior  
Redeemer of our souls.)

After a pause for a breath of air, Masha continued:

“Достойно есть яко воистину, блажити тя Богородице  
Присно блаженную и пренепорочную  
и мать Бога нашего.  
Честнейшую херувим,  
и славнейшую воистину серафим,  
Без исления Бога слова рождышую,  
Сущую Богородицу величаем.

Слава, и ныне  
Господи помилуй. Господи помилуй.

Господи благослови.  
Господи Исусе Христе сыне Божий  
Молитв ради пречестыя твоя матере  
и святого ангела моего хранителя,  
и всех ради святых,  
Помилуй и спаси мя грешнаго  
яко благ и человеклюбец.”

(Deserving in all truth are you of our praise  
Always Blessed and Virgin Bogoroditsa  
And Mother of our God.

Most honorable cherubim,  
And most glorious in truth seraphim,  
The incorruptible God-the-Word is born  
And we exalt the true Bogoroditsa.  
Praise, now and forever.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, bless us.

Lord Isous Hristos Son of God  
Prayers for the sake of your most honorable mother  
With the power of the honored and life-giving cross,  
And my holy guardian angel,  
And for the sake of all the saints  
Have Mercy and save me a sinner  
For you are good and a lover of humanity.)

By the time the old style Julian calendar on the wall said January 1, Masha began to come out of her daze. She turned her attention away from the gloomy suffering world that she had envisioned in her dream. She started to smile once again, and the heavy burden of sorrow that she seemed to carry fell off her shoulders. She played more with the children in Andrey's house, and she helped Paraskeva with the cooking. Masha also began to talk with Ivan about teaching Nikolai how to read Old Church Slavonic so that he would be educated in the holy books.

"Ivan, I have something to tell you," said Masha the morning of January the 1st as they sat around the fireplace. They had just finished the service in celebration of the Circumcision of Christ and in memorial also to St. Basil, the great Greek teacher who wrote a lot of the liturgical books that the Old Believers read during their services. They were alone in the house, for Andrey had gone fishing for steelhead with Antip, and the children were playing outside with Paraskeva.

"What is it, my dear?" asked Ivan. He slid closer to Masha and put his arm around her and gently patted her belly with his left hand. "Is it something about our other little one?"

"No, it's still too early for that," remarked Masha. "I have three more months to go. It's about Kolya that I want to talk to you about."

"What about Kolya?" asked Ivan.

"Kolya told me you would teach him the Азбука/Azbuka (Primer), and then you would buy a car and take him for rides in it," said Masha in one steady stream.

"Азбуку учат, во всю избу кричат/Azbuku uchat, vo vsyu izbu krichat" (They're learning the primer, and they're screaming it out throughout the hut), said Ivan, quoting an old proverb he had learned. He thought in reverie how his Grandfather Iov had taught him how to recite the Old Church Slavonic back in China. He could still hear the echoes of the past as the names of the beginning letters [азъ, буки, веди/az, buki, vedi] (a, b, c) sounded clearly in his ears.



"You will teach him as you promised, won't you?" asked Masha. She was determined to hold Ivan to his word.

"Of course," responded Ivan immediately. "We'll start today. What better day to start than a holyday."

That same day in the afternoon the seven-year-old Nikolai was shown his first Азбука/Azbuka (Primer prayer book). The Azbuka was a small compact book of 48 pages, and its thin 4 1/2" wide by 7" long form was covered with a thin dark red cover.

"Will you buy a nice car when I learn to read?" asked the anxious Nikolai. He had his mind fixed on riding in the front seat of a car beside his dad.

"Yes, I promise to buy a nice car for both of us," conceded Ivan. "And maybe if you're a good boy and learn to read good enough to recite the holy books in church, I'll get you a car when you are old enough to drive."

"How old will I have to be?" asked Nikolai with his eyes wide open.

"In America you have to be sixteen years old to get a permit to drive," said Ivan with a smile on his face. He was watching his son's eager expression on his face. "You only have nine years to wait," added Ivan facetiously.

"I can't wait," said the hyper-active Nikolai.

"First things first, though," said Ivan as he placed the Azbuka (Primer) in front of Nikolai. "Cross yourself before you open any holy book. Remember, this will be your first book."

Ivan used the word книга/kniga (book) to mean a holy book. Any other book was always referred to in a diminutive term – книжка/knizhka (small book).

Nikolai crossed himself and so did Ivan. Then Ivan opened the tiny book and explained the red title lettering.

"The red letters say," began Ivan, "'Beginning instruction for any person who desires to study the books of holy writings.' Now the first prayer you must say when you begin to read this book is, 'In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.' After that you must pray, 'God, give me help and enlighten me in this study.' "

Nikolai learned to repeat the prayers by heart. Then he was shown the thirty-six letters that comprised the old language and he was taught how to recite the names of each letter, which were used as an aid to remembering the name and order of each letter. Afterwards, he was taught to read each letter in combination with one of the eleven vowel variations. Then a consonant letter "p" (American "r") was added to teach the concept of how to blend letters.

Nikolai kept repeating all the letters, and combinations of letters, for over one hour. Finally he sighed and indicated that he was tired. The father allowed him a half-hour break and time for a snack. Then the long process of holy education continued.

"I will read to you the following words and names that are shortened in print by the use of a sign we call a 'титла/titla', which is used over a word when it needs to be shortened to make room in a line or when it's a commonly used word," explained Ivan. "Most of the time the титла/titla (shortened-word sign) is used constantly with words and names that are holy and are used over and over, like [БГЪ/Bg'] (God) and [Исѣ/Is'] (Isous)."

"But the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) doesn't have that funny sign," observed the astute student, pointing to the abbreviated [Бѣа/Btsz].

"Very good, you noticed the difference," commended the teacher. "Yes, some words like Bogoroditsa have a letter on top to show how the word is shortened. The two most frequent letters used on top of words are 'Д/D' (American 'd') and 'c' (American 's'). Sometimes 'T' (American 't') is used, also."

"You mean like this word with the 'c' ('s') here," said Nikolai, pointing to the word [Крѣтъ/Krt'] (cross).

"Excellent," applauded Ivan. "That word is крест/krest (cross). My, you are a good student. I think I'm going to enjoy teaching you."

Several of the Ribrov children had gathered around the family room coffee table and were listening quietly to the reading of the Old Church Slavonic language. Haritina was

watching Nikolai show off. Prokopy was following the teacher's finger as it pointed to the printed word.

"Now listen to the holy words that you will need to memorize later," said Ivan.

"All those words!" exclaimed Nikolai with exasperation.

"It's only two pages and a few lines on the third page," said Ivan, turning the page and showing the tired student what lay in store for him.

"That's a lot," said Nikolai. His face turned red with frustration and tears began to well up on the outer corners of his eyes.

"Remember the car," said the coaxing father. He put his arm around his young son and comforted him. "We'll take it nice and slow. It will be hard at first, and you will have to submit to many hours of study, which means less time for play; but in the long run you will become strong in the holy word. And you will learn how to read the holy words for the people when they come to church to pray to God."

Nikolai imagined himself reading the holy books. He had seen a boy about eight years of age reading the Psalter back in Brazil. He recalled the boyish voice chanting the words of King David:

Блажен муж, иже нейдет на совет нечестивых, и на пути грешных не ста, и на седалищи губитель не седе. Но в законе господни воля его, и в законе его поучиться день и ночь. И будет яко древо сажено при исходящих вод, еже плод свой дать во время свое. И лист его не отпадет, и вся елика аще творит, успеет.

(Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of the sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.)

"What are you daydreaming about?" asked the perturbed father, who saw that his son's mind had wandered off somewhere into the distance.

"I was just thinking of Iriney reading ' Блажен муж/Blazhen muzh' (Blessed is the man)," remarked Nikolai.

"You will learn to read that, too," commented Ivan. "Now, let's get back to the words and names with the титла/titla (shortened-form sign)."

Ivan began reading the long list of holy words and names that seemed to be a children's catechism in the most frequently used holy words. The words simultaneously acquainted the beginner with the most important shortened holy words and with the religious ideas that were the foundation of the Old Belief. The words were like keys into a spiritual world.

For the first letter 'A' (A) were the words: ангел/angel, ангельский / angelic, архангел / archangel, архангельский /archangelic, апостол/apostle, апостольский/apostolic.

The letter 'Б/Be' (B) had: Бог/God, Божество/Godhead, Богородица / Mother of God, блажен / blessed, благословлять / consecrate, благословение / blessing, благодатный / beatific.

The letter 'В' (V) had: Владыка / Lordship, Владычица/Our Lady, владычество / Sovereignty, Воскресенье/Resurrection (Sunday).

The letter 'Г/Ge' (G): Господь / Lord God, господство/rule, государ/state official, господин/sir, госпожа/lady.

The letter 'Д' (D): Дух/Spirit, духовный/spiritual, Давид/David, девица/virgin, девство/virginity, душа/Soul, день/day.

The letter 'Е' ('ye'): естество/Substance-essence, Евангелия/Gospel, евангелист/evangelist, епископ/bishop, епископство/episcopate.

The letter 'И/Ее' ('ee'): Израиль/Israel, Израильский/Israelite, Исус/Isous, Иерусалим/Jerusalem.

The letter 'К' (K): Крест/Cross, крещение/Baptism, Креститель/Baptizer.

The letter 'Л' (L): Любомуудрый/Lover of Wisdom, людской/human.

The letter 'М' (M): Мудрый/Wise, мудрость/wisdom, милость / mercy-grace, милосердие / compassion, милостыня/alms-charity, молитва/prayer, мать/mother, Мария / Mary, мученик / martyr, месяц / month, младенец/infant.

The letter 'Н' (N): Небо/heaven-sky, небесный/heavenly, наш/our, ныне/now-today.

The letter 'О' (O): Отец/father, отечество/fatherland, отеческий/fatherly.

The letter 'П/Pe' (P): Премудрость / All-wise, престол /throne-altar, преподобный/reverend, праведный/righteous-just, пророк/prophet, предтеча/forerunner.

The letter 'Р' (R): Рождество/Christmas-nativity, рождественский/of Christmas.

The letter 'С' (S): Свят/Holy, священник/priest, солнце/sun, сердце/heart, страсть/passion, смерть/death, слава/praise, свет/light-lamp.

The letter 'Т' (T): Троица/Trinity, трест/trust, thrice blessed, thrice holy.

The letter 'У' (U): Учитель/Teacher, ученик/student, ученица/school-girls, учёный/scholarly.

The letter 'Х' ('kh'): Христос/Hristos, Христов/of Hristos, Христианин/Christian.

The letter 'Ц' ('ts'): Царь/King, Царица/Queen, Церковь/Church, Царство/Kingdom, царский/kingly.

The letter 'Ч' ('ch'): Человек / Man-person, человечество /humanity, человеческий / human, честь / honor, честный /honest.

By the time Ivan finished reading all the holy words, even little two-year-old Nestor was peering into the little book that contained all the magic words of power. All the children's ears were absorbing the chant-like sound of the holy words. Nestor tried to imitate some of the sounds he was hearing. The children laughed as they listened to Nestor try to say 'Царство/Tsarstvo' (Kingdom), "Оа! Оа!"

Even Ivan laughed with the children, for he felt a sort of comic relief after all the serious study. He grabbed the laughing Nestor into his arms and threw him up several

times in the air. The other children started begging to be tossed up also. Ivan, however, could only manage to twirl the other children. The playfulness continued for several minutes, when all of a sudden Haritina heard a car drive up to the house.

"Тятя приехал/Tyatya priyehal" (Daddy came home), Haritina cried out. She ran to the living room window to look.

Sure enough, Andrey Ribrov and Antip Svyatogorov had finally returned from their fishing trip. It was already dark, and a fine drizzle began to fall gently to the earth. It wasn't cold enough yet to produce freezing rain. The temperature hovered around 33 degrees.

"Well, fellows," said Ivan as he walked out to the car. "What did you catch today?"

"I got two nice-sized steelhead," proudly stated Andrey. "A male and a female." He picked the fish out of the trunk of the car by the gills and held them up to his shoulders. The fish from head to tail measured about 42 inches. The silver scales reflected the porch light as Andrey proudly displayed his catch.

"And what did you catch?" asked Ivan as he turned to look at Antip. Antip kept his cap over his eyes and didn't look into Ivan's eyes as he calmly answered, "I had one on the line, but it got away."

Masha and Paraskeva came outdoors to look at the fish. The children followed after they had put on their shoes and warm coats.

"Which one of you women is going to clean the fish?" asked Andrey when he saw the two women coming to see his prize catch.

"You caught it, you clean it," answered his wife Paraskeva succinctly.

"Well, Antip," said Andrey to his fellow-fisherman, 'you go home and get your wife and children and come on over for a fish dinner tonight. According to our устав/ustav (book of rules), we can eat fish today, so we're going to have us a feast."

"That sounds like a great idea," said Antip. He cheered up when he thought of the tasty piece of fish he would be eating for dinner. He didn't mind going fishing with Andrey, even though he knew Andrey was a better fisherman than he was. If he didn't catch any fish, at least he knew Andrey would share whatever he caught.

Antip went home while Andrey cleaned the fish in the garage. The boys watched Andrey clean out the guts. Haritina screamed at the sight of the bloody scene and went back inside the house to help her mother set the table.

When the three families finally gathered together to share the fish with the fried potatoes and vegetables, it was raining outside and the temperature had dropped below 30 degrees. Ivan kept adding dry logs to the fire. The children kept poking around the fire with little twigs that were used for kindling.

Before the parents and children started to eat, Andrey said a prayer and everyone crossed themselves. He recited his usual "Lord, have mercy" several times before he chanted some words about a holy feast, which included the heavenly bread of Hristos, the bread which everyone who eats of will never die. After the prayer, everyone began to eat. Everyone had a piece of oven-baked fish except Nikolai and Haritina, who couldn't stand the smell and taste of fish. After the sumptuous meal, the families gathered around the fire while Ivan read a section from the Azbuka (Primer prayer book) in memory of St. Basil.

"St. Vasily (Basil) the Great," read Ivan, "was going through Antioch and was teaching the disciples of Lebanon how to have spiritual purity and physical dispassion. He told them to follow the path of meekness, to have a determined voice and a devout word, to make sure the food and drink was agreeable, to keep silence before elders and to be obedient to wise men, to perform one's duty to the powerful, to show unhypocritical love to one's equals and younger ones, and to separate oneself from the evil carnal people."

As Ivan continued reading the moral instructions of St. Basil, Masha started to think about the future and about her

wish to own her own house and farm. She had talked with Ivan previously about working in the fields wherever they could find work so that they could save enough money for a house. Andrey had told them about berry fields that would need work on as soon as the cold month of January had passed. Masha would be able to help at least during the month of February and possibly part of March if she felt strong enough and the newly-formed life within her was able to stand the strain of hard work. Masha was determined to see all her dreams fulfilled in the bountiful and prosperous land of America.



# Russian Alphabets, Azbuka / Ancient Kiril, Glagolic

## Russian Letters from the Azbuka

## Angel - - and other Azbuka Words

## Azbuka Words, continued

## Azbuka Words, continued

Кириллическая азбука в сопоставлении с византийским унциалом и глаголицей

Византийский унциал IX—X вв.	Кириллица			Буквы глаголицы
	Буквы кириллицы X—XI вв.	Название букв	Звуковое значение	
А	А	азъ	[a]	А
В	В	вукы	[o]	В
Г	Г	гъди	[n]	Г
Д	Д	глаголи	[r]	Д
Е	Е	добро	[d]	Е
—	Ж	кестъ	[c]	Ж
—	З	жизнѣти	[ж']	З
З	И	зѣло	[z'а']	И
Н	Н	зѣлѣмъ	[z]	Н
И	О	ижон	[u]	О
—	П	юке	[u]	П
К	Р	(г'срѣ)	[r']	Р
Л	С	како	[k]	Л
М	Т	людѣмъ	[l]	М
Н	Ф	амѣсанте	[m]	Н
О	Х	нанѣ	[n]	О
П		онъ	[o]	П
Р		попон	[p]	Р
С		рыци	[r]	С
Т		слово	[s]	Т
У		терѣдо	[t]	У
Ф		оука	[y]	Ф
Х		фратъ	[f]	Х
		хѣръ	[x]	

Византийский унциал IX—X вв.	Кириллица			Число-вое значение	Буквы глаголицы
	Буквы кириллицы X—XI вв.	Название букв	Звуковое значение		
Ω	Ω	отъ (омега)	[o]	800	Ω
—	Ϟ	ни	[u']	900	Ϟ
—	ϙ	уръѣ	[u']	90	ϙ
—	Ϡ	ша	[w']	—	Ϡ
—	ϡ	штѣ	[w'а']	—	ϡ
—	Ϣ	кръ	[w]	—	Ϣ
—	ϣ	крь	[w]	—	ϣ
—	Ϥ	крь	[w]	—	Ϥ
—	ϥ	мѣ	[æ]	—	ϥ
—	—	—	[ʼy], [jʼ]	—	—
—	—	—	[ʼa], [ja]	—	—
—	—	—	[ʼe], [je]	—	—
—	Ϧ	къ	[q]	(900)	Ϧ
—	—	—	[ʼe], [je]	—	—
—	ϧ	къ	[q]	—	ϧ
—	—	—	[ʼq], [jq]	—	—
—	Ϩ	къ	[x]	60	Ϩ
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Б : Б ГЪ БЖТВО БЦА БЛЖЕНЪ  
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## Chapter 9 -- "The Epiphany (12th Day)"

Twelve months later, during the season of the Epiphany (the appearance of the Holy Trinity at the Baptism of Christ at the Jordan River), Ivan finished putting up the triangular trusses for the roof of his new home. Masha had given birth on the last day of March (which came in like a lamb and went out like a lion) to a healthy eight-pound baby boy. The boy was christened Pasha, and he was a spitting image of his mother, bearing the same narrow cheeks and indented forehead that his mother carried.

Nikolai had finished learning the azbuka, and he was rewarded with a ride during the summer to Austin Hot Springs on the Clackamas River in a 1958 Ford Station Wagon. Nikolai had even helped his father and mother in the berry fields, where the industrious family soon earned enough money to put a down payment on a five acre berry farm with enough land to build a new home.

Ivan had also made a large sum of money when he joined his friend Antip in the lucrative logging business. They spent several weeks at a time cutting down trees near Longview, Washington. The money Ivan earned at the dangerous job made it possible for him to buy a decent used car. In addition, he had money left over to buy building materials for the new three-bedroom house that Masha wanted.

Ivan's old friend Alyosha Chestnoslov and his family had moved from Brazil along with several other families during the past year. Alyosha and his three strong sons, Petya, Mihail and Tihon, were able to work on the building of Ivan's new home for minimum wages. Ivan made a bargain with Alyosha that he would help him when he decided to build his own house. Alyosha had helped build many homes in Brazil out of necessity to make extra money, and he saw a good future in house building in Oregon.

"Do you think we'll be able to put the plywood up tomorrow," asked Ivan as he finished securing the last truss over the garage.

"If it doesn't rain," responded Alyosha. He looked up at the scattered gray clouds as they migrated from the coast eastward to higher elevations.

"I'd like to get the roofing finished and all the tile laid before the holyday," Ivan said, referring to the holyday known as the Epiphany, which reached a climactic point twelve days after Christmas.

"My boy Petya will lay the tile on the roof over the main part of the house in less than a day," boasted Alyosha. "He is really fast with that hammer. He'll outdo both of us on that roof."

"I know," admitted Ivan. "I saw how he set up the frame of the house. I had to keep filling his pouch with nails almost every hour."

"And with Mihail carrying the tile on his muscular shoulders and Tihon lining them up with the chalk lines, you should have that roof completely covered in less than a day easily, including the garage," predicted Alyosha.

"I'd like to start moving in soon after the праздник/prazdnik (holyday)," said Ivan. "A new family is expected to arrive from New Jersey tomorrow, and Andrey wants to take that family in for a while, especially now that he knows I can make it without his help."

"That Andrey is quite a friend," remarked Alyosha. "He helped me find a nice home in town to rent until I saved enough money to buy a nice farm and, hopefully, build a house someday like you're doing."

"He told me that the family coming from New Jersey is a family of Old Believers from Turkey," said Ivan. "The father was an elder in Turkey, and he hopes to start a church somewhere in this area."

"What is his name?" asked Alyosha.

"I think his name is Golubin," said Ivan. He took off his cap and scratched the short hair on his head as he tried to recall the first name of the Turkish elder. "Oh, yeah, now I remember. It's the same as my second son's name, Pavel."

"I hear that several hundred of them want to come out to Oregon and settle down," said Alyosha.

"Andrey told me that in one of the letters that he received from Pavel Golubin, he was informed of their need for new marriage partners for their young people," said Ivan.

"I wonder if it will work," reflected Alyosha. "I remember how our Harbintsi fought with the Sinziantsi for possession of the land and for better profits at the market-place back in Brazil. Sometimes I wondered if we even belonged to the same religion or believed in the same God."

"Andrey assured me that the Turkish Old Believers kept the Old Belief, and that they will be compatible with our people," reassured Ivan.

"That's still to be seen," stated Alyosha in a pessimistic tone.

The two old friends climbed down from the secured trusses and put the tools of their trade away before calling it quits for the day. They drove to Alyosha's house for dinner. Masha and Varvara had put together a huge pot of Russian borsch. The meatless borsch was filled to the brim with chopped potatoes, beets, carrots, celery, onions and lots of cabbage.

The men spent most of the evening talking about the building of the house. Alyosha suggested hiring some fellow Old Believers to do the plumbing and electrical work. He recommended Vladimir (Volodya) for the plumbing, and he suggested Asteriy for the electrical wiring. He also named Meletiy as the best man for laying the carpets and the linoleum in the kitchen. Most of the other work, including the building of the fireplace, would be done by Ivan and Alyosha with his sons.

The women, Masha and Varvara, spent their time in the kitchen talking about their children. The older boys and Nikolai were playing in the garage with a pigeon that Nikolai had caught; the pigeon had built a nest on one of the rafters and obviously meant to stay permanently in his new home. While the older children played and the younger Pasha sat on his mother's lap, Varvara kept telling Masha how lucky they all were to be in America. Varvara continuously brought up the subject of life in China.



"When I think how life was in China," said Varvara, who was seven years older than Masha and was able to remember more about the big war, "I thank God and all the saints that I made it out alive."

"You lost your mother and father during the war, didn't you?" asked Masha, who had remembered hearing stories about mothers and fathers being tortured at the hands of the invading Japanese.

"I was only 14 at the time, and I had nowhere to go," said Varvara. She began to reminisce with a sorrowful and tearful look on her face. "I went from house to house, living with whoever would feel merciful toward me. I would work as a maid, as a farm hand, sometimes milking the cows as a regular chore, and even as a cook for one family just to stay alive and have a place to live. I prayed three *лестовки*/lestovki (three rounds of the rosary) every night to be delivered from the trials and sufferings that I was being put through. Finally, after the war, Alyosha met me at the home where I milked cows for a living. He had come over to buy some milk since his parents' cow had just died; when he saw me stooping over to fill a pail of milk for him, he smiled at me and said some kind words that made me fall in love with him instantly."

"How is it that you only had three boys by him?" asked Masha. She was beginning to reflect on her own fate as a mother of two boys.

"The boys were born almost one right after the other," said Varvara. "No sooner would one be weaned than another one would be born. They're about a year and a half apart from each other."

"How is it that you didn't have any more children?" asked Masha curiously. "Maybe you would have had a girl."

"As a matter of fact," said Varvara, "I did have a girl, but I lost her when she was barely three months. I haven't told many people about this, but I had an accident with the last pregnancy. I had fallen into a ditch during a dark night in winter, and all my water had gushed out. It was a miscarriage. My womb dried out afterwards, and a Chinese



doctor told me I wouldn't be able to bear any more children. He was right, after all."

"That is so sad," said Masha. "But how did you know it was a girl if it was only three months?"

"Those Chinese doctors had a way of finding out," answered Varvara. "That's all I know about it. I just accepted the word of the doctor."

"Ivan and I are hoping and praying that our next child will be a girl," remarked Masha.

"I hope and pray for you, too," said Varvara. She fell into a silent reverie as the impact of her recollection brought back old, forgotten feelings of loss. She found it hard to hold back the tears as she remembered laying the three-inch fetus into a tiny box for an Orthodox burial. Varvara hid her face as she walked away from the kitchen and went into her bedroom. Masha did not follow, for she understood that her friend wanted to be alone with her painful memories.

The following day the men worked on the roof in spite of a slight drizzle that kept coming down all day. Only once, during the noon hour, did the sun break through the overcast sky. When the roof was completely covered with sheets of plywood, the sky cleared up. The men were not too happy with the forces of nature playing such tricks on them, raining on them when they wished it would stop and stopping only after they had finished their work and it was no longer important whether it rained or not. But such was the weather in wet and green Oregon, and the inhabitants of the land had to get used to the mixed blessing and curse.

On the day before the great holyday, which is known by various names (Theosophany or Epiphany, which means the appearance of God through the person of Christ; and the Baptism of Our Lord, which was for the cleansing of man's sins), the roof was finished and Ivan was able to move in. He set up temporary sleeping quarters in the living room. The rest of the house would be built piecemeal with them living in it. But now that he had a roof over his head, Ivan didn't mind. And neither did Masha. It was her first house in

America, and she could now think of beautifying her own home.

Later, on the evening before the service of the Epiphany, the father called his son to go with him to Andrey's house for a ritualistic cleansing in the баня/banya (steam-bath or sauna). Andrey had built a modern version of the bathhouse that his father had taught him how to build back in China. He had discovered and dug out a well about a hundred and twenty feet deep behind his house, and over that spot he built a wooden bathhouse that measured twelve feet in length by seven feet in width.

Andrey brought his son Prokopy, also, to what was the young boys' first experience with a cleansing ritual. The men entered the front door and undressed in a small entrance area, where hooks on the left wall were hung for the towels and clothes, and a shower on the right was attached for washing with water after the steam-bath. The young boys, Nikolai and Prokopy, undressed shyly, following the example of their fathers.

"You mean I have to take off my underwear, too?" asked Nikolai. He stood in the entrance area and held on to his white shorts with both of his hands.

"You want to wash and clean your whole body, don't you?" questioned his father.

The young lad stood for a moment and thought about what his father had said, then he slowly dropped his shorts and followed the men through a second door into the steam room. A box of chopped wood stood in the left corner under a low bench. Andrey put some small pieces of kindling wood cross-wise into a brick stove made out of bricks that had three holes partially drilled through them. He lit a match and set a curled newspaper on fire, then he carefully placed it under the wood. He closed the square iron door and waited for the fire to flame up before he placed some bigger logs on top to heat up the little brick stove, which was only 18" wide by 18" high by 36" long. A round aluminum vent went up from the stove and out the side of the bathhouse.

"Can I throw some water on the rocks?" asked Prokopy, who had opened the cold water faucet that was connected to a large water tank and was filling up a pan with water.

"Not yet, son," answered Andrey. "Wait till I put the bigger wood in." Andrey unlatched the iron door and peeked inside the stove. It was time to place the heavier logs in.

"You know," said Ivan, as he sat on the narrow first row of the double-tiered benches. The children had crawled up on the broad top tier. "I remember reading in the 'летопись/letopis' (ancient Russian chronicles) about the Apostle Andrew's visit to the land that later became Russia. After he had blessed the hills of Kiev and prophesied that God would build many churches in a great city that would arise there, he went to Novgorod. There he saw people who lived according to the customs of their forefathers, and he marveled when he saw how the people bathed themselves in their wooden bathhouses. The Apostle Andrew later told many listeners how in the land of the Slavs the people would warm themselves to extreme heat, then undress, and after anointing themselves with soap made from animal's fat, they would take branches and lash themselves in, what he called, voluntary torture."

The round river stones piled on top of the brick-stove began to heat up, and Andrey threw some cold water on the stones to start the steaming process. The two young boys climbed down from the top bench and helped throw water on the stones. The steam rose up to the ceiling and around to the sides of the rectangular room.

"Then the Apostle Andrew told his listeners that the people would beat themselves so violently that he wondered how they even came out alive," continued Ivan. "He said that they revived themselves by drenching themselves with cold water."

"And now we do the same thing that our ancestors did," commented Andrey. He climbed up on the top tier and picked up a bundle of seven birch branches that were tied together with a short thick green and orange belt. "We continue to mortify our flesh just like our fathers taught us."

Andrey beat himself with the thin ends of the birch branches. The pores of his skin opened up and the thickening steam penetrated into the openings to cleanse and purify the outer layer of the body.

"Тятя/Tyatya," asked Prokopy curiously, "why are you beating yourself with the веник/venik (bundle of twigs)?"

"To drive away all the бесики/besiki (little demons)," answered his father in a semi-serious tone. "Let me hit you a little." The father playfully swung the branches on his son's behind. Prokopy was not pleased with the mild lashing on his bottom, and he grabbed the branches from his father and said, in imitation, "Let me hit you a little."

The father laughed and he grabbed a plastic cup full of water and dumped it on his son's head. Prokopy got a small cup and threw water on his father's head. And so the battle continued while Ivan and Nikolai sat on the top row and laughed at the spectacle.

Eventually every one got their turn at being lashed and splashed on with water. Soon the room was steaming so hot that the young boys couldn't stand the heat anymore. They went to take a shower and cool off, while the older men continued to sweat until the air coming out of their nostrils felt like fire and the breath entering their lungs burned their inner bronchial passageways. Then they too went out of the steam-room and revived themselves with cold water.

After everyone washed himself with soap, dried themselves with towels, and dressed, they went home and prepared for the evening service. The services were still held at Andrey's house, even though more families had arrived during the past year from Brazil and Argentina. Andrey had asked his guest, Pavel Golubin, to inspire the gathering of worshippers with the chanting of the confession liturgy of Saint John of Chrysostom the Golden-mouthed ['златоуст/zlato-ust']. Ivan walked in through the door with his family as the evening service was already in progress. As he bowed to the front where the ikons stood and then to the right and left to honor the worshippers who had already gathered, Ivan heard the deep voice of the Turkish nastoyatel

(elder) chant: "и помощники ти сотворити милостынями и приношений/e pomoshchniki ti sotvoriti milostinyami e prinosheniy" (and bring alms and gifts to those who want to help).

Ivan walked up to the front to join the group of chanters who stood behind a lectern and waited for the cue to chant the canon-hymn in honor of the three wise men, Melchior, Balthasar, and Caspar, who came bearing gifts on this holyday. Ivan glanced at the black-robed nastoyatel with a thick stringy black beard and an oval bald spot on the top of his black-haired head. This was the first time he had seen and heard the commanding voice that seemed to fill the room with the feeling of the presence of an awesome being.

When Pavel Golubin ended his liturgical flight through the wisdom of "Golden-Mouthed" St. John Chrysostom, the group of chanters behind the lectern glanced at the large holy book in front of them and lifted their voices at the initial lead of Ivan in praise to the wise men who brought the gold, frankincense, and myrrh. As Ivan chanted, his mind drew images on his inner screen of the gold that was brought as tribute to God the King; his nostrils were filled with the surrounding sweet-smelling incense as he phrased the word "frank-incense"; and his stomach turned as he reflected on the myrrh that was used to embalm the dead, and which symbolized the sacrificial victim. After the canonical hymn to the wise men was ended, there was a moment of silence.

And then an old familiar voice rang out in a high-pitched tone:

“Во иордане крещающуся тебе господи, троическое явися поклонение: родителей бо глас свидетельствоваше тебе, возлюбленного твоего сына именуя, и дух в виде голубине, извествоваше словесе утверждение. Явлейся Христе Боже, и мир просвещей, слава тебе.”

(When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. The voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee his Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the immutability

of the words. O Hristos our God, who didst appear and illuminate the world; glory to Thee.)

Ivan was surprised to hear Simeon Raskolin's voice again. He did not know that Simeon had just recently come with a group of Old Believers from Brazil and had settled near Salem in a small town named Gervais. He had been so busy working on the building of his own house that he had lost track of time and had not bothered to find out about the new developments in the community of Old Believers.

During the purification-by-water rite, the worshippers walked two-by-two to the front to receive a small glass of holy water. The worshippers first crossed themselves, then they kissed a holy ikon, and finally they were allowed to drink the blessed water. The water had been blessed by putting four candles around it in the four cardinal directions: north, east, south, west. The partners took three sips of the salt-flavored water and then made a half bow as they faced each other. Nikolai and Prokopy marched down the middle together and made their bows just like their fathers, Ivan and Andrey. The women also joined in the spiritual purification, vowing that they would be careful not to allow any unclean thing to enter their mouth, nor would they spit out any of the holy contents from within.

A confession of faith in the Holy Trinity was pronounced, and a short prayer was uttered to the Holy Trinity:

“Пресвятая троице помилуй нас. Господи очисти грехи наша, владыко прости беззакония наша, святые посети и исцели немощи наша, имене твоего ради. Господи помилуй, Господи помилуй, Господи помилуй. Слава ныне и вовеки.”

(Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord cleanse us from our sins. All-mighty forgive us our lawlessness. And may the saints visit and heal our sicknesses, for your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Praise now and forever.)

And the entire service was concluded "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

## BUNDLE OF TWIGS



## INCENSE



## Chapter 10 -- "Presentation of Hristos (Christ)"

After the service, Ivan had a chance to talk with Simeon. He showed the old gray-haired and gray-bearded *nastoyatel* (elder) his grown-up boy Nikolai. The old man took the young lad in his arms and lifted him up on his knee.

"Well, tell me, Nikolai," said Simeon in his usual friendly manner whenever he spoke to children, "how old are you now?"

"I'm eight years old," answered Nikolai with a wide grin on his face, "and I go to school."

The young boy was proud to have finally started school. He had missed his first year at school because the family had just arrived from Brazil and they were not aware of the laws of the land in America. Paraskeva had told Masha that children could be enrolled in school at the age of seven, while Varvara had said that she didn't even bother enrolling her three sons in school since they were all over fourteen years of age and were no longer required to go to school if the parents didn't wish them to go to school.

"And what do they teach you at school?" asked the inquisitive elder. His face became serious and a stern look shown deep in his eyes.

"They teach us to speak American," answered Nikolai.

"Don't forget your native tongue," admonished Simeon. "You don't let him speak American at home, do you?" asked Simeon, turning to Ivan, who had been standing by and watching the scenario between the elder and the young boy who had been baptized by him more than eight years ago.

"Oh, no," answered Ivan quickly. He felt a pang of guilt grip his conscience as he recollected immediately afterwards of the times he had asked Nikolai what he had learned at school and Nikolai had verbalized the new American words he was learning. "Well, only American words that have to do with his school work," added Ivan as an afterthought.

"Be very careful, Ivan," cautioned the old man, whose face took on a more merciful aspect. "You have made an understandable mistake, but do not repeat it. Remember to



preserve the Russian language like your father and his father did. If you allow a foreign language to creep into your home, it will destroy you and your children. It will set your children against you, and they will no longer keep the purity of the Russian language. That will have its effect on the Old Belief, too."

Ivan stood with his arms crossed against his broad chest and listened to the forewarning. The position of his arms were the same as when he stood during services and listened to the liturgy, except that this time he felt defensive about the issue at hand.

"Don't you think we need to learn the language in order to live in this land?" asked Ivan in a defensive tone. Ivan had already run across business situations where he had to depend on the more learned Andrey to help him out. He had felt ignorant and insecure during those moments, and he had tried to learn more of the American language in order to be able to communicate whenever the need arose.

"Learn only as much as is necessary to perform your everyday business," taught the old man, who had learned how to live in China and Brazil without learning the language of the land.

Nikolai listened to the debate between the old man and his father, and he began to wonder who was right.

"If I don't learn how to speak по-американски/по-американски (in American)," interjected Nikolai, who wanted to tell his father something, "then I won't be able to understand anything at school."

"If the law of the land says you must go to school to a certain age," said the elder, who wanted to teach the young lad some more of his ancient wisdom, "then you must obey. But do not forget your mother tongue, which is Russian. You must speak only Russian at home. You'll learn enough of the American language at school to get you by in life."

"But it's so hard at school if nobody helps me at home," complained Nikolai.

"Listen to your elders," demanded Ivan, talking to Nikolai in a sharp direct tone. "They know what's best for you."

"That's right, Nikolai," said Simeon approvingly. "It says in our holy books to love, honor and obey our parents. And that also means those who instruct you and guide you in your spiritual life, like your nastoyatel (elder) and your крёстные/kryostniye (Godparents). Ivan, hand me my book on the table there."

Simeon pointed with his stubby finger to an ancient book with wooden covers that were wrapped around with black leather and nailed to the wood with short nails. Ivan walked over to the small table against the wall and picked up the heavy worn-out book with faded green edges on the pages.

"Nikolai, go get a chair and sit beside me," directed the old man. "Ivan, you too. I want to show your son something in this book that will be of interest to you, too."

While father and son fetched chairs to sit on, the old man unclasped the two brass clasps that bound the precious treasure that he never went anywhere without. He carefully thumbed through the faded brown pages with moldy green edges till he found the section entitled, "Поучение како подобает детям чтити родители своя/Poucheniye kako podobayet dyetyem chtiti roditeli svoya" (Instruction on how children should honor their parents).

"Listen to what it says here," instructed Simeon as Nikolai hurried back with a chair and sat down beside the elder on his right hand. Nikolai peered into the book and tried to make out some of the words, hoping to put his learning of the azbuka (primer) to some use.

Simeon read in a slow and steady monotone:

Послушайте братие заповеди господни, еже рече к законнику, сия есть первая заповедь, да любииши отца и мать, да благо тебе будет, и будеши долголетен на земли. Иже бо чтеть родителя своя, и слушает повеления ею, сей очистит грехи и от Бога прославится, азе кто озлобит родителя, сей пред Богом согрешив и проклят от людей. Иже бысть от отца и матери и от церкви да отлучиться и смертью да умрет.

(Listen brothers to the commandments of the Lord, as he has spoken to the one versed in law. This is the first

commandment: love your father and mother that it may be well with you, and you will live long on the earth. For he who honors his parents and obeys their commandments will cleanse his sins and will be praised by God. But he who angers his parents, this one has sinned before God and is cursed by people. Let this one be separated from mother or father and from the church and let him be considered dead.)

Nikolai kept staring at the words on the printed page, and he tried to verbalize some of the words along with Simeon.

"My goodness," remarked Simeon, after he had finished reading the passage to Nikolai, "you know how to read. Who taught you?"

"My father," proudly replied Nikolai.

"He was a good student," explained Ivan.

"You're taking after your father," complimented Simeon. "He was a good student, too, from what I heard from others."

"Can you teach me to read your big book?" asked Nikolai. "I've only read the Azbuka (Primer prayer book) so far."

"I'll be more than glad to," joyfully said Simeon, who was pleased to see such a willing student.

"Can you show me some places in your book that talk about Рай/rahiy (paradise)?" asked Nikolai. "I like to hear about рай/rahiy." Nikolai pronounced the word рай/rahiy ('rye') without the strong trill in the letter r.

"I'd love to," said the old teacher, who was carefully thumbing the pages back to a section entitled "Слово о первом небеси/Slovo o pearvom nebesi" (The Word about the first heaven).

"Here it is," said Simeon when he found the right page. "I'll read slow, and you read along with me."

Nikolai pressed his knee against the old man's thigh as the old teacher placed the right half of the age-old book that was printed in 1878 on his left leg. Nikolai reverently took hold of the half-inch leather-covered wooden cover of the book and followed the old man's stubby finger as they read in unison:

"В начале Бог в первый день сотвори десять чинов: а/ чин ангели, в/ архангели, г/ начало, д/ власти, е/

престоли, s/ господствия, з/ силы, и/ херувими, ф/ серафими, i/ горних сил небесных.”

(In the beginning God on the first day created ten ranks: (1) angels, (2) archangels, (3) principalities, (4) ruling powers, (5) thrones, (6) dominions, (7) powers of might, (8) cherubim, (9) seraphim, (10) high powers in heavenly places.)

Simeon skipped over to the next page. His blue eyes rapidly flowed through the words, absorbing everything in its path.

"I skipped the part about Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, and the others," remarked Simeon as an apology. "I want to show you the part about the four cherubim. Here it is."

The old teacher pointed his index finger again to the appointed spot and started reading again. Nikolai followed along with intense interest and enthusiasm as they both read:

“И четыре херувимов созда: восток, запад, север, юг. Четверообразни лица их по образу смотрения сия Божия: первое лице, подобно льву владычество его царское образуется; второе лице подобно тельцу, служение небесных чинов скажется; третье лице человечье, скажется пришествие сына Божия, и сына человеческого; четвертое лице подобно орлу свыше летящу духа святого с небеси сходяща скажет.”

(And four cherubim were created: east, west, north, and south. Four images were on their face, according to the divine face that was in view: the first face was like a lion to represent God's lordship over his kingdom; the second face was like a young ox, which speaks of service to heavenly ranks; the third face was a man's, which declares the coming of the Son of God and the son of man; the fourth face is like the eagle and tells of the flight from above and the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven.)

As Simeon read about the heavenly places, Nikolai's imagination began to soar and he began to form images in his mind of what he was reading. His curiosity was stirred up, and he wanted to know more.

"Can we read some more about рай/rahiy (paradise)?" asked Nikolai. The pleading expression on his face appealed to the old teacher.

"I have a book at home that has pictures of the place of fire and of the place where a river of milk and honey flows, and where God sits on his throne in the heavens," stated Simeon enticingly. He saw that the young boy had an insatiable thirst for knowledge.

"May I see it, please?" begged Nikolai.

"Not tonight, my dear boy," answered Simeon. "It's getting late, and we must get some sleep. Tomorrow's a new day. You ask your father to bring you over to where I live, and I'll gladly show you everything you want to see and teach you everything you want to know."

Ivan conceded to the boy's wishes and told him that he would take him to Simeon to learn more from the holy books.

And so for over a year Nikolai continued to visit Simeon's humble hut in Gervais. He learned to read from dozens of holy books, but his favorite was the picture-book that was entitled "Житие преподобнаго Василия новаго/Zhitiye prepodobnago Vasiliya novago" (The Life of holy Vasily the New). This favorite holy book of his included the visions of Vasily's disciple Grigory. There were 44 colorful picture-plates to illustrate the visions of the after-life.

The first picture showed the soul of a sleeping disciple, Grigory, being taken out of the body by angels to see what happened to a soul after the body died. The next eight pictures showed the soul being carried by angels to the nether regions where it had to be judged in the balance by wicked-looking administrators of the soul's fate. The pure soul (known as Theodora in the holy book), after passing the lower regions and toll-houses, was next seen going through the gates of heaven in three pictures. One picture showed the pure soul afterwards looking back down and seeing six regions of the place of punishment: in the first region was a lustful person eaten by a snake; in the second was an unmerciful person sitting in fire; in the third was a drunkard

sitting in a pot stewing over a fire; in the fourth was a sorcerer hanging upside down with a snake coiled around him; in the fifth was a gossip hanging by the tongue and standing in fire; in the sixth and last region was a robber standing in darkness and pleading for mercy.

The pictures that showed punishment, demons, and the lower regions scared Nikolai. He enjoyed the pictures that showed the heavenly places more. Of the brighter, heavenly pictures, there was one which showed Grigory taken up by angels and thirty which depicted in detail scenes from the Apocalypse and other events of the after-life.

Meanwhile, the year 1965 passed quickly. The Turkish Old Believers had moved from New Jersey and were quickly building a co-operative village three miles south of Woodburn called Bethlehem Village. A white church was erected by the able-bodied men in the middle of this tiny community, and by the end of the year, a bell from a small tower could be heard for miles around, awakening the people to come and worship. A church was also erected in the rapidly growing Harbin community.

Masha had given birth to her first girl six days into the new year 1966. Eight days later the baby was christened Ustina. According to the custom of her people, Masha did not eat with her family for forty days. She was given a plate that was kept for "the unclean" and the 'паганы/pagani' (pagans) to eat off of. Forty days later, she was taken to church where a candle was lit and the mother, along with the child, received a special prayer for purification.

## Chapter 11 -- "The Annunciation"

"Look!" cried Nikolai on the first day of spring. "There's a flock of ducks flying north." Nikolai pointed up to the blue sky where a V-shaped formation of ducks was winging its way back to its nesting grounds in the north after a winter sojourn in the warm south. He had heard the sound of their honking for several minutes before he was able to determine their location in the sky.

"That's a sure sign that spring is here at last," said Masha, who had come outdoors to enjoy the warm spring weather while the baby slept in her crib. She held little Pasha, who was almost two years old now, in her arms. He had on a baby bonnet that was especially made for him by Masha. There were seven blueberries on the left side and seven blueberries on the right side of the bonnet; and on the top, in between two rows of white lace, was a blue flower on the end of a long green stem. The blueberries were divided into a cluster of three in the middle and four individual ones forming a square around the three in the middle.

"Um, Um," shouted little Pasha, as he excitedly pointed up to the sky in imitation of his big brother.

"He thinks we should get one for food," translated Nikolai, who had heard his little brother make those sounds whenever he saw food or wanted to eat.

"We can't eat meat, now," said Masha, instructing the tiny tot in her arms. "It's the time of the 'большой пост/bolshoi post' (great fast), and we're not allowed to eat any meat nor any dairy products."

"Um, Um," repeated little Pasha, not paying any attention to his mother.

Masha and Nikolai laughed at little Pasha's persistence. The little one was not aware that the great fast (or Lent) had started seven weeks before Easter. It was the longest fast of the church year, and even the children were subjected to its trying asceticism. The body was placed under the strict rule of the holy order of the church in preparation for the

glorious, illuminating meeting with God during the Easter season.

"Mother," said Nikolai thoughtfully. "Why is it that we must fast for such a long time before Easter?" He grabbed a stick with the palm of his hand and gripped it strongly as he threw a rock up in the air and hit it with the stick. He had wanted to ask that question ever since Lent started, when he prayed three лестовки/lestovki (rosary sets) and when he saw people go through confession for drinking 'пиво/реево' (beer) and for other sins.

"Come and sit down beside me," said the mother, "and I'll tell you." Nikolai dropped the stick and sat down beside his mother on a bench under a green patio cover. "There was a holy man named St. Theodosious who instructed people according to the rules of the church, and he told them how they must fast and pray to keep away the demons and evil thoughts that were set up as temptations to one who wanted to cleanse the soul and prepare for the resurrection of the Lord. He said that we should use the sign of the cross and pray, 'Господи Исус Христос помилуй нас/Gospodi Isous Hristos pomilui nas' (Lord Isous Hristos, have mercy on us). By fasting and praying thus, we keep away from excessive food, which causes evil thoughts and desires, and from laziness and too much sleep, which causes demons to enter into the body and keep us from praying and going to church."

"But it's so hard to stay away from all the sweets and candies that all the other children eat at school," said Nikolai.

"Those паганые/paganiye (pagan) children never fast like we do," said Masha. "Они все будут гореть в огне/Oni vsye boodoot goryet v ognye" (They'll all burn in the fire). But you remember to fast so you'll go to 'рай/rahiy' (paradise)."

"I want to see rahiy (paradise)," said Nikolai suddenly.

"Ask your 'ангел хранитель/anghel hranitel' (guardian angel), and pray to him, and maybe he'll show you a dream of рай/rahiy (paradise)," said Masha.



"Did you ever have a dream of paradise?" asked Nikolai. Little Pasha had climbed off his mother's lap by now and was running around on the green lawn, chasing a small butterfly.

"I once had a dream where the Богородица/Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) took me to all the places where people are punished," said Masha.

"Tell me about it," pleaded Nikolai, who was curious about such things. Masha told him her dream about the journey with the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) through the lower world.

"Did you ever have a dream about paradise?" asked Nikolai again after his mother related the awe-inspiring dream of the lower regions.

"There was only one time that I came close to that kind of dream," confessed Masha, "and that was when I saw a bearded old man in a long white hooded robe with a round dot on his forehead who brought a baby boy to me and sat him down on my lap and told me to feed him. That was just before you were born."

"Was I the boy in your dream?" asked Nikolai.

"I don't know," answered Masha. "When your father said I should ask the elder Simeon to interpret the dream, he said that the dream was about Hristos, who came as a child and was the Word made flesh. The child was dark-skinned, and Simeon said that the child was dark because of the suffering he had to bear for mankind in order to redeem the world from sin and darkness."

"Simeon is a very wise man and a good teacher," admitted Nikolai. "He taught me how to read many holy books. I will have to ask him about the dream."

Nikolai fell into a silent dreaminess. All of a sudden his life had taken on a deeper meaning, for he began to imagine that he was the boy in his mother's dream.

On the next week-end that Nikolai went to Simeon's humble hut to read the holy books, he asked Simeon about the dream and whether he was the boy in the dream.

"My precious little one," responded the old man endearingly upon hearing the boy's question. "Do you think you were the boy?"

"Yes, I do," replied Nikolai. "My mother told me she had the dream just before I was born."

"And where were you born?" asked the old man.

"My mother said she found me on the water somewhere," replied Nikolai naively.

"And who made you?" asked the teacher.

"Боженька/Bozhenka (God)," answered the student.

"And do you know what God made you out of?" asked the teacher. Nikolai shook his head.

"Святой Евстафий/Svyatoy Evstafiy (St. Evstafiy) teaches us that the first man Adam was made out of the earth, the sea, the rocks, the sun, the fire, the clouds, the wind and the Holy Spirit," said the teacher in one breath. "The flesh God made from the earth, the blood from the sea, the bones from the rocks, the warmth from the fire, the eyes from the sun, the thoughts from the clouds, the breath from the wind, and the soul from the Holy Spirit."

"Man is made from all that?" asked Nikolai in awe.

"Yes, from all that," reaffirmed the teacher.

"I didn't know that," said Nikolai. For the first time he became aware of how much he didn't know.

"You have much to learn, my boy," stressed the teacher. "Listen now very carefully while I tell you a wise parable from this holy book that I carry with me all the time."

Simeon cleared his throat. Then he rolled his eyes upward to refresh his memory. He held the old wooden book (which was written 7367 years since Adam) in the palm of his hand without opening it, for he knew the parable by heart. Then he began to relate the allegorical story:

"A certain man had in his house a certain wife who was noble and beautiful, and she was born from a royal lineage. That man was with her day and night and still he wasn't able to satisfy his desire, for he loved her very much. That wife had 20 servants. And the man was with those 20 servants, and still he wasn't able to satiate himself with their

sweetness. From them were born 108 very beautiful youths. They always presented themselves before a certain king and sang well-known pious songs. The king loved them very much. The certain man was with those youths all the time, and still he couldn't fulfill his desire and his wish. The beautiful and noble wife had two older women, who were wet-nurses to the youths. And the certain man was with the older women, and even with those he wasn't able to fulfill himself, and he regarded them as more than honey and honeycomb. This man also had a house of his own which was most wonderful, and in this house was his spouse, who was shut up like a dove in a cage which glistened like a palace. That same man had a very high and wondrous hill, which was higher than his house. From that hill flowed two streams (sources) of warm water. He bathed in them every day and every hour, cleansing and washing away every filth and healing every sore. And he remained in that good moral behavior of his all the days of his life. And from there he went to the Lord into eternal life. And may we likewise live, that we, your humble servants, O Lord, may be found worthy to receive your eternal goodness and blessing.

"And now listen carefully to the explanation of this wise parable: The certain man is Everyman. And that in his house is a wife of kingly blood, that is God's holy book, the Psalter. It's of a kingly line because it was compiled and written for all generations of people by King David. The man is with it day and night, means he is constantly with the Psalter. And where it says that the noble wife had 20 servants, it means 20 catechisms (confessions of faith); and where it says from these servants were born 108 youths, it means 108 psalms. And where it says two older women, it means the older songs of the Psalter. And the man sang those pious songs day and night, and he couldn't satisfy himself with their sweetness. And he regarded it the greatest thing in his life to be with them day and night, and the tears he shed were his bread and water. And so in that good confession of his he went to the Lord to Eternal Life. And where it says that he had a choice and clean house, that is the temple of his body.

And where he has a spouse in it, that is his only-begotten soul in the middle his body; and it stays there like a beautiful dove in the midst of a palace of light, because his body is clean and pure. And where there is a hill higher than his house, that is the head on top of his temple. And where there are two streams (sources) of warm water, those are the continuous gladdening tears from both of his eyes."

Simeon stopped speaking. He looked squarely at Nikolai's face and watched the boy's expression.

"Wow!" exclaimed Nikolai in an outburst of emotion. The expelled breath that flowed with the only word that he could think of to express his total involvement seemed to hit Simeon with a force that made the old man recoil in astonishment. He did not expect the story to have such a strong impact on the boy. "That was simply beautiful!" added Nikolai after a moment of reflective thought.

That night Nikolai dreamed that he was in paradise, and he saw Hristos on a throne behind which shone the sun. Beside him sat his mother, the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). And he saw himself sitting on his mother's lap. When he woke up he was reassured in his own mind that he was the boy in his mother's dream. He tried to tell his mother about the dream, but all he could remember was that he was sitting on his mother's lap and looking up at Hristos and the Bogoroditsa.

"I saw God and his wife," was the child-like way that Nikolai expressed it.

"Kolya," said Masha endearingly after Nikolai had finished telling his dream. "I sewed a new shirt for you for Easter. I finished it earlier than I thought of finishing it, so you can wear it for the праздник/prazdnik (holyday) that's coming up tomorrow."

"Which праздник/prazdnik (holyday) is that?" asked Nikolai.

"It will be 'Благовещение Богородицы / Blagoveshcheniye Bogoroditsi' (The Annunciation of the Mother of God)," answered Masha. The holyday was celebrated on March the 25th, according to the old style.

"That was when the angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary and announced to her that she would be the Mother of God."

"Haritina told me that girls won't be able to comb their hair on this prazdnik (holyday)," said Nikolai. "Is that true?"

"She probably misunderstood her mother," explained Masha. "Girls and women won't be able to braid their hair on that day, that's all. They'll have to braid their hair the night before."

"Haritina told me that God made this prazdnik (holyday) because God saw a chickadee build its own nest on that day," said Nikolai. "Is that true?"

"That's partly true," explained Masha. "There is a story that a chickadee doesn't build its own nest. Another bird builds a nest for it, and when the chickadee lays its eggs in the nest, then the bird who built the nest comes back and warms the eggs for the chickadee. There is another story that tells of a man who was building a house. When the chickadee saw the man building the house, it wanted to do the same as the man; so it built a nest right on top of the man's house. It was the first time that God saw a chickadee build its own nest, so he made a holyday to remember that day. That's the way the story goes."

"That story must have a meaning to it," intuitively thought Nikolai. "I'll have to ask Simeon what it means," he said to himself.

But the next day, when he heard that his 'крёстный/krostoniy' (Godparent) Vasily Velikov had arrived from Brazil and was coming over to his house as a guest, Nikolai forgot all about asking Simeon about the story of the chickadee and its nest.

Nikolai was so excited about his godparent that he hardly paid any attention to the new shirt his mother put on him that day. It was a violet shirt with four clusters of six purple grapes each on the front panel of the shirt and five clusters of six purple grapes around the collar; two green leaves stemmed from the top of the purple grapes and a spiraling green vine connected the clusters of grapes.

Nikolai was also excited at seeing his three "cousins" (by virtue of their being daughters of his godparent), that he had a hard time concentrating on the liturgy that was chanted on the evening before the holyday. His three "cousins," Nadezhda, Anastasia, and Irina, were grown-up girls now, ranging in age from eleven for Irina to fifteen for Nadezhda.

Nikolai stood beside his dad and chanted along with the rest of the worshippers: "Holy Virgin Mother of God joyful Mary, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. And Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb."

At the midnight service, Masha proudly stood with her friend Zinaida Velikov and her three daughters and made the 'поклоны/poklony' (obeisances to the ground) together with them. It seemed as if there was a natural rhythm that the five women felt as they crossed themselves and then bowed to the ground, touching their forehead to a 'подручник /podruchnik' (square prayer-cloth) that they held in their left hand as they bowed. They made the movements gracefully and in unison.

As the closing hymn was chanted, Masha thought of the beautiful holyday, of being reunited with her friends in America, and of the big dinner she had prepared for her guests in her house.

The closing words seemed to echo in the green country молельня/molelnya (church) hours after the worshippers had gone to their separate homes:

“Днесъ спасение нашего главизна, и еже от века таинства явление: сын Божий, сын Девы бывает, и Гавриил благодать благовествует. Темже и мы с ним Богородицы возопиим: Радуйся благодатная, Господь с тобой.”

(Today is the crown of our Salvation and the manifestation of the Eternal Mystery. The Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel announceth the good tidings of grace. Wherefore let us also with him cry to the Mother of God: Hail! Thou that art full of grace; the Lord is with thee.)

## Prayer Cloth



## Chapter 12 -- "EASTER WEEK (PASKHA)"

Nikolai spent most of his time now with his крёстный/krostniy (Godparent) Vasily and with his three cousins: Nadezhda, Anastasia and Irina. The Velikov family was given temporary living quarters in Ivan's house. Vasily worked with Ivan throughout the autumn and winter months trimming Douglas Fir and pine trees for the lumber industry. It was a very lucrative business, and by spring time Vasily had saved enough money to put a down payment on his own house and farm.

Whenever Vasily and Ivan would come home on holydays or on week-ends after several weeks in the woods, Nikolai would always run up to his Godparent Vasily and beg him to tell him another story. Vasily was a splendid story-teller, and he loved to captivate an entire audience with Russian tales that he had heard his father tell when he was a boy. Vasily had told many short stories about animals, like the favorite one about a fox and a wolf, and another one about a white duck. He had told them longer stories, like the one about the Geese-Swan, and another one about the Sea-King and Vasilisa the Wise. One night he spent a whole evening around the fireplace telling the long story about Ivan Tsarevich (the prince), the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf.

But on this particular evening in 1967, several days before Вербное Воскресение /Verbnoye Voskresenye (Palm Sunday), Vasily decided to tell his favorite story about Marya Morevna (Marya of the Sea). Andrey's family had come to visit that evening, and there was a large group of listeners as Vasily began his story:

"In a certain kingdom lived Ivan Tsarevich (Prince), who had three sisters: Marya, Olga and Anna. The father and mother had died, but before they passed away they told Ivan: 'Whosoever comes first to court your sisters, to him give her hand in marriage. Don't keep the sisters long without marriage!'

"After Ivan buried his parents he went with his sisters to play in a green garden. Suddenly, a dark cloud appeared in



the sky. Just as they ran in the house the storm began and the thunder clashed. At the sound of the thunder the ceiling split in two and in flew a hawk. The hawk hit himself against the floor and changed into a good young man. 'Hello, Ivan Tsarevich, I come to you to court your sister Marya,' said the sharp fellow. 'If you love my sister, then take her, and let her go with God,' said Ivan. Marya agreed to be married to the hawk-man, and after the marriage ceremony he took her to his own kingdom.

"A year passed and Ivan went with his two sisters to play in the green garden. Again a cloud came. Just as soon as they entered the house the ceiling fell apart and in flew an eagle. The eagle hit himself against the floor and changed into a brave man. 'Hello, Ivan Tsarevich, I come to you not as a guest as before, but as a gentleman courting a lady,' said the brave man. And he courted Olga. Ivan said, 'If you love Olga, then I will not hold her against her will.' Olga agreed, and she married the eagle-man, who swooped her up and carried her to his own kingdom.

"Another year passed, and Ivan went with his youngest sister into the green garden to play. Again a black cloud and a storm came up, and they ran into the house. The thunder hit the ceiling and in flew a raven. The raven hit himself against the floor and turned into a valiant man. 'Well, Ivan, I came before as a guest, but now I come for your sister Anna,' said the valiant man. 'I won't take my sister's will from her, so if you love her, let her go with you,' said Ivan. Anna married the raven-man, and he carried her off to his kingdom.

"Ivan was left alone now. He lived a year by himself and he became so lonely that he decided to search for his sisters. As he traveled on the road he chanced upon a field where an entire army lay slain. 'If there's a live man here,' called Ivan, 'then tell me who defeated this army.' A live man answered, 'This army was defeated by a beautiful queen named Marya Morevna (Marya of the Sea). As he rode further he came upon some white tents, and Marya Morevna rode out to meet him. 'Hello, tsarevich (prince), where does God take you--by your will or against your will?' she asked. Ivan Tsarevich

answered, 'A brave fellow never goes against his will.' 'Well, if you're not in a hurry, come and be my guest,' said Marya Morevna. Ivan stayed with her two nights, fell in love, and married her.

"Marya Morevna took Ivan to her kingdom, and they lived together for some time before she again decided to go into battle. She left the care of the kingdom in Ivan's hands and told him, 'You can go everywhere, except don't look in this store-room.' But Ivan opened the door as soon as Marya left, and there he saw Koschay the Deathless hanging on twelve chains. Koschay begged Ivan, 'Have mercy on me and give me drink. I've been hanging here ten years and my throat is dry.' Ivan gave him a bucket of water, then a second and a third. After drinking the third bucket of water Koschay regained his former strength, and he broke all twelve chains. 'Thank you, Ivan Tsarevich,' said Koschay, 'but from now on you won't see Marya Morevna.' Koschay flew out the window, caught up with Marya, and carried her away with him.

"Ivan cried bitterly and decided to go on the road in search for Marya Morevna. On the third day, as the sun was just coming up, he saw a wondrous palace; in the palace was an oak tree, and in the oak tree sat a hawk. The hawk hit himself against the ground and turned into the good young man. Marya Tsarevna (Princess), Ivan's sister, ran out to meet him. Ivan stayed with them three days and told them all about his adventures and that he was searching for Marya Morevna. 'It'll be hard to find her,' said the hawk-man, 'but at least leave your silver spoon with us so that we will remember you.' Ivan left the spoon with them and went on his way.

"And so Ivan went for three more days until he saw another marvelous palace. This time he met the eagle and his sister Olga Tsarevna. He stayed with them three days and left them a silver fork, and then he went on his way.

"And so Ivan went for three more days until he came to the splendid palace where his sister Anna Tsarevna and the raven lived. With them he left his silver box.

"Then Ivan went on the road again. On the third day he finally met Marya Morevna. 'Akh, Ivan, why didn't you listen to me and not look in the storeroom like I told you,' said Marya Morevna. 'Forgive me, Marya Morevna, and let's forget the past,' said Ivan. 'Let's hurry away before Koschay catches us.' Koschay, in the meantime, was hunting, and when he was returning home in the evening his horse started to stumble. 'Why are you stumbling, you foolish horse, do you hear some misfortune?' asked Koschay. 'Ivan Tsarevich has taken away Marya Morevna,' answered the horse. Koschay quickly chased down Ivan and took away Marya Morevna. 'This time I'll let you go,' said Koschay to Ivan, 'because you gave me water to drink. And a second time I'll forgive you. But the third time I'll chop you up into pieces.'

"So Ivan went after Marya Morevna a second time, and Koschay chased him down and took Marya away. Ivan went after Marya Morevna a third time, and Koschay chased him down again. This time, however, Koschay kept his promise and chopped Ivan into pieces and put him in a barrel and threw the barrel into the blue sea.

"At that moment the silver that Ivan gave to his brothers-in-law turned black. 'It's evident there is some trouble,' they said. The eagle went after the barrel in the blue sea, the hawk flew after the water of life, and the raven flew after the water of death. Then they met together and put the pieces of Ivan together. The raven sprinkled Ivan with the water of death, and the body grew together; the hawk sprinkled Ivan with the water of life, and Ivan shuddered and came to life. He said, 'I sure slept a long time.' 'You would have slept longer if it wasn't for us,' said the brothers-in-law. They invited him over, but he said he had to find Marya Morevna.

"After a short time Ivan found her and told her, 'Find out where Koschay got such a good horse.' Marya went to find out. Koschay told her, 'Past the thrice nine lands, in the thrice ten kingdom, past a river of fire lives Baba Yaga. She has such a mare on which she rides around the earth every day. She has many such mares. I was a shepherd for her three days, and I didn't lose one mare, so she rewarded me with a

colt.' 'How do you get across the river of fire?' asked Marya Morevna. 'I have a handkerchief which makes a very high bridge when I wave it three times on the right side, and the fire can't reach me,' said Koschay. Marya secretly carried away the handkerchief and told Ivan all she had heard.

"And so Ivan went across the river of fire. He went for a long time without food and water. He chanced upon a mother bird with her tiny chicks. Ivan wanted to eat a tiny one, but the mother begged him not to. 'There will come a time when I will be useful to you,' she said. Ivan went further and he saw a bee-hive. He was going to eat some honey when the mother bee flew up to him and asked him not to. 'There will come a time when I will be useful to you,' she said. He went further and he saw a lioness with her cubs. He wanted to eat a small cub, but the lioness asked him not to. 'There will come a time when I will be useful to you,' she said. So Ivan went on hungry as before.

"Finally he came to Baba Yaga's house. Around the house were 12 hearths, and on 11 of the hearths were human skulls. 'Hello, бабушка/babushka (old woman),' said Ivan. 'Hello, Ivan Tsarevich,' answered Baba Yaga, 'have you come by your own free will or because of some need?' 'I came to earn a богатыр/bogaty (heroic) horse,' answered Ivan. 'You only have to work three days, and if you don't lose a single mare, then I'll give you a bogaty (heroic) horse; but if you lose a single mare, then I'll have your head on top of the twelfth hearth.'

"Ivan agreed and Baba Yaga told him to get to work. As soon as Ivan let the horses out to pasture, they all ran away and Ivan was left crying. He sat on a rock and went to sleep. Just as the sun was going down, a mother bird flew up to Ivan and awakened him. 'Get up, Ivan, the horses are all home,' she said. Baba Yaga, in the meantime, was yelling at her horses, 'Why did you come back home?' 'How could we help it when birds from all over the world came and almost poked out our eyes?' answered the horses. 'Well, next time run into the woods,' said Baba Yaga.

"The second day the horses ran away to the woods when Ivan let them out to pasture. Again Ivan sat down on a rock and cried, and then he fell asleep. The sun went down, and a lioness came to him. 'Get up, Ivan, the horses are all gathered together,' she said. Baba Yaga again yelled at her horses, and the horses said, 'How could we help not coming home when wild animals from all over the world came and nearly tore us to pieces.' 'Next time go to the blue sea,' she said.

"The third day the horses ran away to the sea, and they stood in the water up to their necks. Again Ivan sat down on a rock to cry, and then he fell asleep. The sun went down, and a bee came to him. 'Get up, Ivan, the horses are all together,' she said. 'Go on home, but don't show yourself to Baba Yaga. Go hide in the stable instead and ride away with a colt at midnight.' Ivan did as he was told by the bee. Baba Yaga again yelled at her horses when they returned, and they told her, 'What could we do? Bees from the four corners of the world attacked us and started stinging us.'

"Baba Yaga went to sleep, and at midnight Ivan rode away with a horse. He rode up to the river of fire, and he waved his handkerchief three times on the right side. Suddenly, a high bridge formed a path for Ivan across the river. When Ivan got across to the other side, he waved the handkerchief just twice, and the bridge became very tiny. In the morning Baba Yaga gave chase to Ivan and the stolen horse, and she came up to the tiny bridge. 'It looks like a good bridge,' she thought. But when she got to the middle, the bridge collapsed and she fell into the river of fire.

"Ivan finally came to Marya Morevna. She ran up to him and threw her arms around his neck. 'How did you come back to life?' she asked. 'Oh, somehow,' answered Ivan. He told her to come with him. 'I'm afraid,' answered Marya Morevna. 'If Koschay catches us, he'll chop you into pieces again.' 'No, he won't catch us,' said Ivan. 'Now I have a horse that flies like a bird.' They sat on the horse and rode away. This time when Koschay came home and the horses stumbled, and Koschay asked what was the matter, the horse answered, 'Ivan took Marya Morevna away again. And God

knows if we can catch them this time, for Ivan has a horse that is better than I am.'

"Koschay gave chase anyway. When he finally caught up with Ivan, the horse that Ivan rode on gave Koschay's face such a big kick that the face was crushed to pieces. Ivan made a fire and put Koschay on it and burned him till there was nothing but ash left. Then Ivan scattered the ashes to the winds.

"Marya Morevna then sat on Koschay's horse and Ivan sat on his own. They rode off to visit the raven, then the eagle, and finally the hawk. Everywhere they went, people said, 'Akh, Ivan, we thought we'd never see you alive again. Well, you didn't go through all that trouble for nothing. A beauty such as Marya Morevna can be sought for in the whole wide world, but you won't find another one like her.' After all the feasting, Ivan and Marya Morevna went to their own kingdom, where they lived happily ever after."

Vasily ended the story with a broad sweep of his arms, and Nikolai and Haritina rushed into the extended arms.

"That was a beautiful story!" exclaimed Nikolai as Vasily put his right arm around him.

"I liked it a lot, too," added Haritina with a blushing smile on her face as Vasily put his left arm around her.

Some of the other children crowded in to hug the overwhelmed story-teller. "Tell us another story," they demanded.

"Not tonight," said Vasily. "Some other night."

The children insisted, but Vasily stood his ground. Eventually the children gave up and found other games and activities to occupy their energetic minds and bodies.

The following night Ivan and his family joined the Velikov family and all the other parishioners of the Sinkiang group in the newly-constructed green *молельня* /*molelnya* (church), which was built less than a mile from the Turkish village of Bethlehem. A light rain sprinkled on the people as they walked across the gravel road and parking lot to the simple country church. The parishioners began gathering at 2:00 o'clock in the morning on 'Вербное Воскресенье

/Verbnoye Voskresenye' (Palm Sunday) in the church that looked like a large undecorated hall. The simple white walls had no lavish embroidered designs. It was the time of the great fast; at Easter the walls would be decorated with flowery drapes, curtains and wall tapestry. The only decorations now were the 41 ikons which lined the top shelf of the eastern wall. One ikon was singled out as the major ikon of the holyday, and that ikon depicted the scenes of Passion Week. The special ikon was set on a table that was flanked on both sides by large old holy books, which were covered with gold-tinted cloths. Forty-two candles were lit before the forty-two ikons. The only other notable feature was a hand-painted Russian Orthodox eight-limbed cross on the front of the table which held the holy books.

All the symbols of the faith were carefully inscribed around the cross, and a colorful flower arrangement made a wreath around the entire emblem of salvation. On top of the cross was inscribed 'Ц С Царь Славы / Ts S' Tsar Slavi, (King of Glory); on the side of the second beam was inscribed 'Ис ХС Исус Христос / Ис Хс' Isous Hristos, (Isous Hristos), and below that 'Сын Божий / Sin Bozhiy' (Son of God); on the sides of the vertical beam was the acronym 'ника/nika' нас искупи кровью адамова/nas iskupi krovyyu adamova (redeem us by the blood of Adam); on the left and right sides of the vertical beams were the first letters of cryptic messages:

РБ/RB (раб божий/rab Bozhiy, servant of God)

МЛ/ML (место лобное/mesto lobnoye, place of the skull)

ГА/GA (глава адамова/glava adamova, head of Adam). Beside the lance was the letter 'к/к' (копье/kopyo), and beside the reed was the letter 'Т/Т' (трость/trost). The cross itself stood upon a raised platform which was reached by ascending three steps from either left or right sides. Underneath the cross was the skull of Adam.

The worshippers made their usual three crossings and they bowed to the right and to the left, then they bowed to the ground. The chanting was continuous. Nikolai made his

way up to the front with his Godfather Vasily. Ivan followed behind them with little three-year-old Pasha, who now had his own black халат/halat (church robe). Nikolai looked at the long row of ikons. He immediately recognized the colorful ikon of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) with the God-child. He glanced momentarily at the ikon of Hristos on the cross and then at the ikon of St. Nikola. His eyes were suddenly arrested by an ikon that he had not seen before; it was the ikon of the beheading of St. John the Baptist, and his head was lying sideways on a platter. Nikolai quickly turned his gaze away from that unsightly image and proceeded to look past the bronze ikons till he saw another colorful one. He smiled when he saw the familiar image of Hristos, the "image not made with hands," and he remembered some of the stories about the famous shroud or Mandylion, as it was called by some.

He recalled hearing that a certain king asked Isous to come to him, but that Isous wasn't able to; instead he wiped a cloth or handkerchief on his face and his image appeared on it. The king was instantly cured of his illness when he saw the image not made with hands on the cloth.

Nikolai continued to look over the ikons as the liturgy went on. Only occasionally would he stop to cross himself and make a bow with the rest of the worshippers. There was one picture that caught his eye later on, and that was the colorful ikon of St. George slaying the dragon. He couldn't remember hearing any stories about that image.

By 4:00 a.m. Nikolai's attention was brought back to the main service, which now began to liven up as the nastoyatel (elder) brought out a box of twigs to pass out to the people. Another box was circulated from person to person at the back of the building; it was a box of short thin candles. Nikolai reached out for a small twig of green pussy-willow, which had just begun to lose its fluffy white miniature starbursts and was bursting forth into a leafy green branch. When Nikolai got the candle from the other box, he lit it from Vasily's already lit candle, and then he placed both twig and candle in his left hand and listened as the liturgy of the



day was chanted by the nastoyatel (elder). "Hosanna in the highest" was the main theme of the long liturgy, which was paid less attention to than the brightly lit candles and dense incense odor that floated over the tops of the people's heads.

A short intermission allowed the young restless children and teen-agers a chance to leave through the back door for a bathroom break and a chance to socialize, while the older men and women and the more orthodox children sat on the plastic-covered linoleum floor and on the benches around the wall to listen to a reading from the gospel account of Hristos raising Lazarus from the dead and then riding into Jerusalem amidst shouts of "Hosanna in the highest." All the candles were put out as the people listened to the slow chant-like reading, which lasted about half an hour. Then the reading ended, the young people re-entered, and the candles were re-lit.

After the service, which ended at 8:00 a.m., the tired worshippers went home to sleep. Ivan stayed with his family long enough to enjoy the пирог/pyrog (meat pie) with salmon, which Masha cooked for Sunday, when fish was allowed. Then he took off with Vasily Velikov and Antip Svyatogorov to the woods of the Evergreen State of Washington. Antip wanted to join them on this seven day trip in order to help pay off his new Ford camper that he had bought. Besides, they would be able to sleep in the camper if it got too cold in the woods. They promised their wives that they would be back by Saturday night and be ready for the Easter midnight service as they drove off.

The three men worked hard trimming and felling as many of the fir and pine trees as they could during the twelve hours that the sun gave them light to work by. The first three nights were cold, and the men slept in their sleeping bags in the roomy camper. Then the temperature changed, and for the next two nights they built a campfire and slept beside the campfire throughout the cool night.

It was on Thursday night that the men began to feel a relaxing warmth course through their bones as they began to discuss the events of Passion Week. Antip Svyatogorov, who

was usually a quiet hard-working man, began to express his strong religious views.

"I think our souls are in mortal danger if we remain in America for too long," said Antip seriously as he gazed into the red-orange interior of the fire.

"How so?" asked Ivan, who had finished eating a slice of Russian bread that Masha had baked for him.

"Our children are tempted with American ways," said Antip. "Look at what happened to Alyosha's boy Petya last year. He got involved with some American girls in Salem, and he started smoking that devil's marijuana. Then he got caught with some of it in his possession. Now, he's serving a jail sentence of six months."

"You're right," said Vasily. "My girls are starting to listen to nothing but that rock 'n' roll on radio. And they keep begging me to buy a television so that they can watch all those ungodly programs that are full of sex and violence."

"I've heard talk that some of our folk are thinking of moving to Alaska or to Canada where the American influence won't bring everlasting damnation on the souls of their children," said Ivan.

"I told my nastoyatel (elder) that I would be willing to take a trip later this summer with a few other men to Alaska," said Antip. "I feel very sad for our children when I see them talking in American at home, when they start running away from home and riding around in racing cars, when they don't say their morning and night prayers unless they're reminded, and when they forget about Hristos and the trials and tribulations he suffered to save mankind from their sins. Last week I mentioned the cross to a young boy and about wearing the Russian belt, and he told me that his parents didn't care if he wore American shirts and American belts; he didn't even have his cross around his neck."

"That reminds me of a story that I read in a book that Simeon Raskolin lent me," said Vasily. "It was about the cross that Hristos was crucified on and how it originally was a tree that grew from three seeds placed in Adam's mouth by his son Seth."

"I think I heard of that story," reminisced Ivan. "Isn't that where Seth went to Paradise and a cherub gave him the seeds from the tree of life whose roots sank down into hell and whose branches reached heaven?"

"That's the one," answered Vasily. "Do you want to hear the story from the beginning?"

"Speak on," said Antip, who had risen to his feet from a stump that he was sitting on and had started to turn the logs on the fire.

"Correct me if I make a mistake, Ivan," said Vasily.

"Go ahead, and don't wait for me to correct you," said Ivan. "It's a long time since I heard the story. My grandfather Iov told it to me back in China, and I scarcely remember it."

"Well, here goes," said Vasily as he crossed himself. "May the Lord guide my tongue and my memory. If my memory serves me right, I think it was just before Adam felt his death was near when he called his son Seth to his side and entreated him, 'Go, my son, to the Garden of Eden and ask the angel who keeps the gate to give me the Oil of Mercy which God had promised mankind.' 'But I do not know the way,' said Seth. 'The path is easy to follow,' said Adam, 'for it's in an eastward direction and you will see my footprints which scorched the soil as I was banished from the garden. Follow the blackened traces where my feet have trod and where the grass has never grown since.'"

"Seth followed his father's directions, and he soon passed the barren fields and came up to the walls of Paradise, where he was suddenly met by a wavering line of fire, upright, like a serpent of light constantly shaking. He saw at once that it was the flaming sword in the hand of the cherub who guarded the gate to the garden. Before Seth could even utter a word, the angel said to him, 'The time of pardon has not come yet. Four thousand years must pass before the Redeemer shall open the door to Adam because of his disobedience. But to show you how future pardon shall come about, you will be shown the wood through which redemption shall come about, and you will be given the seeds from which shall grow, out of the tomb of your father,

a tree upon which the future Redeemer shall die to redeem the old Adam and fallen humanity.'

"At those words the angel swung open the gate and showed Seth the mighty tree of life, whose roots descended into hell and entwined themselves around the body of Cain. Around the bark was coiled a frightful red serpent, which scorched the lower bark and branches. As Seth raised his eyes to heaven he saw that the branches changed their appearance, for they were not scorched and barren, but they were green and covered with flowers and fruit. The fairest fruit was a little babe, a living sun, who seemed to be listening to the songs of seven white doves who circled round his head. A woman, more lovely than the moon, bore the child in her arms.

"Then the angel closed the gate and said, 'Instead of giving you the Oil of Mercy that your father wants, I shall give to you three seeds from the Tree of Life, which you are to place in your father's mouth before he dies.' Seth returned to his father and told him all that he had seen and heard. On the third day his father died, and the three seeds were buried in his mouth, as the angel had instructed. The seeds became a tree with three trunks in one, and the blood of Adam was absorbed into the tree. The three trunks which grew from the three seeds were of cedar, cypress, and pine.

"The story then continues with Noah, who dug up this tree by the roots and took it with him into the ark. After the flood he buried the skull of Adam near Mount Calvary or Golgotha, and planted the tree on the top of Mount Lebanon. Later Moses cut off a magical branch or rod from the tree after he saw it as a burning bush. With the life-giving branch he was able to bring water out of a rock and heal those whom the serpents had bitten in the desert. However, he was not allowed to carry the sacred staff into the Promised Land because of disobedience, so he planted the branch in the hills of Moab.

"During the time of David and Solomon, as the story goes, David sat beneath the sacred tree when he bewailed his sins. Since the tree surpassed all in the forests of King

Hiram, David's son Solomon tried to use it as the main pillar in his Temple. But the carpenters could not cut it so that it could fit, for it was at one time too long and at another time too short. So the enraged Solomon just threw the tree over Cedron, that all might trample on it as they crossed the brook in and out of Jerusalem. When the Queen of Sheba came to visit King Solomon, she saw the virtuous tree and decided not to walk across it. Instead, she said a prayer and then removed her sandals and crossed the stream in a shallow place. The king was impressed by her reverence for the sacred tree, and he had it overlaid with golden plates and hung above the door of his Temple. Some time later Solomon's grandson, I forget his name, stole the gold and buried the tree so that no one would discover his crime.

"From the ground where the tree was buried a spring of living water began to flow and a pool known as Bethesda was formed there. The sick came to the pool to be healed. The angel of the pool was also the guardian of the tree, and it was protected for many years. When the time of the crucifixion came near, the wood rose to the surface, and it was used as a bridge between Golgotha and Jerusalem.

"When Isous passed over the sacred tree to be crucified, it was discovered that there was no wood on the mount; so the tree was cut up into the three types of wood that it originally was made of, cedar, cypress, and pine, and it was made into the cross as we know it. The cross was set up on the same spot where the skull of Adam had been buried. That's why we have the inscription 'глава адова/glava Adamova' (head of Adam) on the bottom of the cross we wear around our necks.

"After the crucifixion it was buried on Golgotha, but it was uncovered by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, in the year 328 A.D. When a sick woman was healed by touching it, the tree became honored as the cross of Hristos. History says that a Persian king carried it away when he plundered Jerusalem, but that it was recovered by Heraclius, who defeated the Persian king in battle on September 14, 615, and we celebrate this

memorable occasion to this very day as the Feast of the Exaltation of the Most Cross."

"Whew," sighed Antip with a deep exhalation after Vasily had finished, "that was some story. I never knew the cross had such a long history."

"There is much that is fascinating about the cross," remarked Vasily.

"You revealed one of the mysteries that I have wanted to know for more than 10 years now," commented Ivan.

"What's that?" asked Vasily, unaware that he had uttered a deep mystery in the telling of the story.

"When my Grandfather Iov went back to Russia in 1957," said Ivan reflectively, "he told me about the three woods that composed the cross, but he did not know that 'pevga' was a pine. I have wondered about that for many years."

"What's so mysterious about that?" inquired Vasily.

"You mentioned that the three seeds grew into three saplings, cypress, cedar, and pine," stated Ivan. "And I always knew that cypress and cedar were sacred because our Lord was crucified on them, but I did not know that the third sacred tree was the pine."

"And just think," interjected Antip, "we've been cutting down pine trees for the past two days."

"That's just what I was thinking," remarked Ivan in an astonished tone.

"I think it's time for me to go to sleep," said Vasily with a big yawn.

Vasily crawled into his sleeping bag and covered his ears while Ivan and Antip continued talking about the mystery of the cross.

The following morning the men woke up at the break of dawn and hurried to the working area with their chain-saws. A thick fog had settled in the forest overnight, and the cold damp feeling woke up the men earlier than they had desired to wake up. Antip was unusually quiet as the three men walked to their destination.

"Antip, why are you so moody?" asked Ivan. "Was it something about our discussion last night?"

"I don't know exactly," answered Antip, who kept his eyes on the ground as he stepped along a narrow path. "I had an eerie feeling when I awoke. It was as if I had a dream that I was descending into a deep pit, but I don't remember any particulars in the dream."

"I have those dreams sometimes, too," said Vasily, who had overheard Antip's statement. Vasily was leading the way down a path that had become narrower and was covered with brush.

"I wouldn't worry about it," said Ivan reassuringly.

Antip didn't reply. The three men proceeded silently, maneuvering their footsteps over the fallen logs and branches. When they came to the spot where they left off the day before, they busily set to work trimming the branches and felling the pine trees. By mid-morning the fog lifted and the men were able to see in all directions all the trees that they had cut for Weyerhaeuser, the big company that they had contracted out to.

It was shortly before noon when Antip was beginning to feel dizzy and light-headed, and he wanted to take a lunch break, but Vasily insisted that they finish the tree that they had started trimming the branches off of. Ivan had cut a nice slice off the side which was facing west, the direction in which the pine tree was supposed to fall, and he had started pounding wedges into a thin cut on the opposite side, when suddenly the tree started cracking. Antip and Vasily were off to the right side.

"There's a knot in the tree!" yelled Ivan. "It's going to twist! Run!"

The tree jerked to the left, and then it was twisted to the right by a thick knot that ran through the middle where Ivan had made the cut. Ivan backed away, but Antip and Vasily were confused by the commotion and the apparent swinging of the tree to the left. They were caught off their guard, and within seconds the tree came crashing down on them.

"Oh, my God!" screamed Ivan as he saw the tree land on his two friends with a thunderous crash. He heard a scream. He ran over to Vasily, who was moaning under the weight of a branch that had snapped his spine in two at the bottom of the lumbar region.

"Get the chain-saw!" screamed Vasily. "Get this branch off me!"

Ivan ran back for the chain-saw. He hurried back and pulled the cord to start the motor. Vasily was sweating from the agonizing pain. Beads of perspiration lined his forehead as he prayed with tears in his eyes, "Господи помилуй /Gospodi Pomilui" (Lord, have mercy). Ivan cut the branch on both sides of Vasily, and then he lifted the wood away from the crushed back.

"Where's Antip?" asked Ivan.

"I last remember seeing him run further toward the tip of the tree," said Vasily. "He wanted to run away from its reach."

"I'll be right back," said Ivan. He took off his warm jacket and laid it over Vasily's quivering body. He was rapidly going into shock, but Ivan had to see what had happened to Antip.

Ivan scampered over the untrimmed upper limbs of the tree. He saw a red jacket under the trunk and rushed toward it. He stopped in his tracks when he suddenly saw the crushed head and the cerebral contents oozing out of the sutures of the broken skull. Ivan turned away and held his hands to his mouth. He was feeling sick to his stomach at the sight of his friend's head being crushed and at the thought that a life had been snuffed out like the light of a candle. The thought also occurred to him that Antip had wanted so much to go to Alaska.

When Ivan staggered back to Vasily, he saw that his friend was still conscious. Ivan felt helpless, for he knew not what to do. It was a mile back to the camper truck. He would have to carry Vasily there on his back and drive him to the hospital.



"Antip is dead," solemnly announced Ivan to the pale-faced Vasily. As if in anticipation of Vasily's question of how he died, Ivan added, "The tree fell on his head."

Vasily looked sorrowfully at Ivan. Then he said, "I can't feel my lower limbs. I can't move anything from the waist down."

"I'll have to lift you somehow on my back and carry you back," said Ivan. He maneuvered Vasily slowly onto his right side, and then he had Vasily grab him around the neck as Ivan slowly lifted the heavy body from the forest floor. Vasily's legs dangled at the sides as Ivan hunched over and began the long walk back to the camper. He left Antip and the chain-saws behind. He would have to return for the dead after he had taken care of the living.

Both Evgenia Svyatogorov and Zinaida Velikov were informed of the tragic accident when Ivan finally reached a hospital in Longview. Evgenia couldn't believe her ears when Ivan told her about Antip; she was crying over the phone into Ivan's ear that she was only thirty years old, and now she was a widow with two young daughters to raise. Zinaida was thankful to God that Vasily was still alive, but she was worried down deep inside how she would support herself and her three teen-age girls now that the breadwinner was immobilized.

It was hard for the friends and relatives of the two families that were hit by the tragic event to be joyful when the 'Пасха/Paskha' (Easter) services began. The week-long Easter Feast became a sorrowful occasion for the people who were involved with funeral preparations for Antip. It was also a time of mixed joy and sorrow for Nikolai, who was glad that his godparent had survived the accident and at the same time sad that his favorite story-teller was hospitalized.

It was a blow to Vasily's ego when the doctors told him after the operation that he had suffered irreparable damage to that part of the nervous system which controlled the lower limbs and the entire lower part of the body from the waist down. They told him he would be paralyzed for the rest of his life and would have to move about in a wheelchair.

Vasily stayed in the intensive care unit all day Saturday; the following morning he was moved to his own room.

On Paskha (Easter) Sunday, after the long mid-night service, and after continuous exclamations of 'Христос воскрес / Hristos Voskresye' (Hristos is Risen) and responses of 'Воистину воскрес/Voistino voskresye' (He is truly Risen), Nikolai went with his parents and the Velikov family to visit Vasily in the hospital. Nikolai brought along a book that he wanted to give Vasily to read while he was bedridden. It was about the Passion of Hristos, which included the Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion, Descent into Hell, and Resurrection of Hristos. Nikolai liked the book because it had colorful pictures of the entire story of Passion Week, starting with the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem on 'Вербное Воскресенье /Verbnoye voskresenye' (Palm Sunday), then continuing with the cruel trial at the hands of the Jews and the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and the suffering of death on the cross, and then concluding with the climactic resurrection on 'Воскресение/voskreseneeye' (Easter Sunday).

Vasily was overjoyed with Nikolai's gift. He thumbed through the pages and tears came to his eyes. Nikolai stood by the bed in his new рубаха/rubaha (shirt) with four clumps of red cherries on the front panel: each clump had three cherries arranged in a triangular pattern with the point down; a green branch with green leaves connected the clumps of cherries.

"Why are you crying?" asked Nikolai. The others stood beside the bed and looked on as Nikolai bent over with a napkin to wipe his godfather's tears away from his eyes.

"I was crying because the pictures reminded me of the suffering and shame that our Savior had to go through on the cross," said Vasily, when he regained enough composure to talk without sobbing. "In comparison to his suffering, what I went through is so small and insignificant."

"Thank God you're still alive," said Nadezhda, his older daughter. "That's what counts." Nadezhda was wearing her new red 'сарафан/sarafan' (jumper dress) with dark red

hyacinth flowers. Over the dress was a white 'запон/zapon' (apron), and on her head was a 'платок/platok' (scarf) with red roses.

"You're right," said Vasily. "But I do feel sorry for Antip."

"He went to 'рай/rahiy' (paradise)," said Anastasia, "and there's nothing sorry about that. He's happier than we are." Anastasia was wearing a new pink sarafan (dress) with twelve groups of three strawberries embroidered around the hem of the calf-length dress. Over her dress was a white zapon (apron) with lace, and on her head was a scarf with yellow and orange butterflies.

Irina stood silently beside Anastasia and cried; she wiped her eyes with the sleeves of her light green dress which had five brown birds with red crests and orange feathers embroidered alternately with five orange-red flowers with five petals on the lower part of the dress. She took out a silver-colored egg, which she had received at the Easter service, from behind her white apron and handed it to her father. Vasily took the silver-colored egg and held it in the palm of his hand.

"You all are such a comfort to me," said Vasily, as he reached out his arms to embrace his wife, three daughters, and Nikolai. Ivan and Masha stood back and watched. "Zinaida, will you do me a favor when you get home?" he asked, after the tearful embracing subsided. "Will you get my 'подручник/podruchnik' (prayer-cloth), the new one with the red diamond-shape in the middle that you made for me at the Epiphany, and give it to Nikolai as a present?"

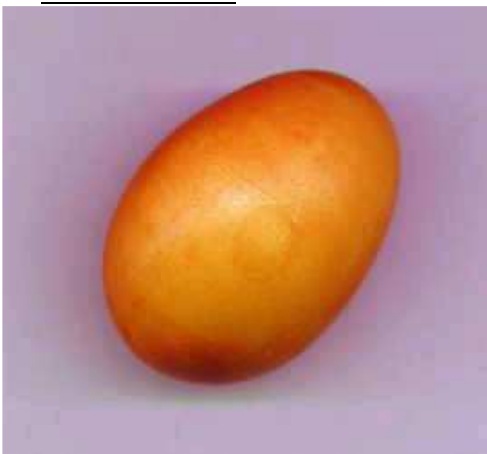
"I'll get it for him tonight," said Zinaida obediently. She had a hard time keeping her tears back.

"Nikolai," said Vasily, addressing the boy in an instructive tone. "The подруchnik (prayer-cloth) will be yours to keep, and I want you to always remember when you bow your head to the ground during your poklony (obeisances) that the red diamond-shape in the middle stands for Hristos, and the twelve triangular-shapes around the center stand for the twelve apostles. And remember also

during this holy week of Paskha (Easter), that each day has a prayer which is addressed to someone in heaven: Monday's prayers are addressed to the angels, Tuesday's to Saint John the Baptist and other prophets, Thursday's to the Apostles and St. Nicholas, Saturday's to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) and to all the saints; Wednesday, Friday and Sunday are special days because on those days we address our prayers to Hristos in remembrance of his betrayal, death and resurrection. Remember always to keep the fast on those two days when the betrayal and death are remembered, Wednesday and Friday."

Nikolai listened as his 'krostoniy' (godfather) instructed him. He noticed a serious tone in all of his words, and he felt that his godfather had become more serious about the religious life now that he had experienced such a tragic accident and had such a close brush with death. There was a change that had occurred in all of their lives that Easter season, and the repercussions of that event would affect their future for years to come.

### EASTER EGG



## Chapter 13, "Mid-Pentecost Wednesday"

"Anastasia is going to get married to Giorgiy," said Mihail Chestnoslov teasingly as Anastasia walked out of the church with her sister Nadezhda.

"You're jealous," said Nadezhda in defense of her blushing sister. They hurried away in the dark to the girls' bathroom. The boys who were standing outside the church laughed as the girls disappeared behind the door of the small building where the bathrooms were located.

"What are you laughing about while church is in progress?" asked an elderly woman who had opened the door and had come out to scold the playful young men, who still enjoyed playing pranks. "You should be inside praying. 'A ну, заходите/A nu, zakhaditye!' (A nu, get inside!)"

The laughter quickly died down and the embarrassed young men scampered into the church ahead of the shaking index finger of the old woman.

It was a warm Sunday morning in early May. The sun was just beginning its slow ascent over the eastern horizon, and the first rays of daylight were visible on the rim of the Cascade Range. A gray GTO roared up to the parked cars on the gravel road, and a young man in his early twenties stepped out. He was dressed in a black shirt with cross-stitched red roses climbing on a vine on his front panel and around his collar, and with twin roses on his cuffs. He had a fuzzy light brown beard which was sparsely distributed along his light-tan colored cheeks and chin.

All of a sudden, the young man stopped in his tracks as he heard a shrill scream coming from the small building which stood about thirty feet away from the church. The door of the small building opened and out rushed Nadezhda. The young man rushed up to her.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Giorgiy!" exclaimed Nadezhda in a surprised voice. "What are you doing here?"

"Our church just finished, and I wanted to see Anastasia," explained Giorgiy quickly. "Where's Anastasia?"

"She's in the bathroom, and there's a snake in there," said Nadezhda. Her voice trembled at the thought of the fearsome snake which had scared her out of her wits.

"Help!" cried Anastasia. "The snake is blocking the door and I can't get out."

Giorgiy rushed inside the bathroom, and the snake reared its head at the sight of the intruder.

"It's only a garter snake," said Giorgiy as he turned around to look at the brown snake. "It won't harm you."

"Kill it!" screamed Anastasia. "I'm afraid of snakes."

"All right," said Giorgiy in an acquiescing voice. He looked into the eyes of the snake, whose quivering forked-tongue was lashing out in self-defense. Then he quickly raised the left heel of his shiny black shoe and thrust it like a spear into the head of the defenseless snake. Giorgiy crushed the head of the vanquished snake.

"Oo, how can you do that?" asked Anastasia in awe of Giorgiy's fearlessness.

"You asked me to do it," replied Giorgiy. "Otherwise I would have picked it up by its neck and thrown him out into the bushes."

"Get it out of here," said Anastasia as she made a grimace on her face. "It's ugly and bloody."

Giorgiy picked up the snake by the tail, carried it across the road, and threw it as far as he could into the field which faced the church.

"There, I saved your life," said Giorgiy when he came back to Anastasia. She had started to walk back to the church with her sister. Giorgiy wanted to put his arm around his bride-to-be and give her a kiss.

"Don't touch me," said Anastasia as she squirmed away in disgust. "You touched that awful snake."

"O.K. I'll go wash up," said Giorgiy, who was beginning to feel less of a hero now that Anastasia was rejecting his advances.

A group of children gathered by the bathroom as Giorgiy went up the stairs to wash himself. They had come out for a break from the long service.

"Giorgiy loves Anastasia," yelled Natasha Svyatogorov, who had already forgotten that her father Antip had died more than a year ago in the woods.

"They're going to get married soon," yelled Prokopy Ribrov in jest. Then he made an obscene gesture with his two hands, which he laughingly displayed to his friend Nikolai.

"Это грех так показывать/Eto grekh tak pokazivat" (It's a sin to show that), said Nikolai, who used the word "грех/grekh" (sin) whenever he disapproved of something.

Prokopy instantly withdrew the right index finger from the left oval shape that he had formed, and he felt embarrassed by his friend's righteous accusation.

Giorgiy emerged from the boy's bathroom with clean washed hands, and he rustled the hair of the children who had gathered around him as he made his way to the church. The girls had already gone in. Giorgiy made his obligatory crossing and bowing after he entered the church. He stood in the back section, where outsiders and unbelievers were supposed to stand; mothers with babies also stood in the back to watch over their babies.

Giorgiy caught Anastasia's eyes looking at him as he stepped to the right side in the back. She was standing to the left and in front of the partition that divided the main sanctuary from the back section. They exchanged secret smiles and warm heart-throbbing feelings as their minds merged with the thought of their forthcoming wedding day.

After the service, Giorgiy saw Vasily Velikov wave at him and heard him call his name.

"Giorgiy, wait a minute," yelled Vasily, who started pulling the wheels of his wheel-chair as fast as he could to catch up with the youthful Giorgiy, who had already reached his showy GTO and was ready to go home. "Come over to our house," said Vasily in a demanding voice.

Giorgiy agreed. This would give him a chance to be with Anastasia and to get acquainted with her family. His parents had already consented to the marriage, even though Anastasia had just turned fifteen and had not even bothered to finish school. Anastasia's parents didn't mind that Anastasia wanted to get married at such an early age; they figured that it was better if she got married to a Russian boy who was also an Old Believer, than to run around loose and free with the possibility of getting attracted to an American boy who was not of their faith.

"I talked to your father last night," added Vasily as an afterthought as he started to turn his wheel-chair around. "He'll come over today to give the blessing to proceed with the wedding arrangements."

Giorgiy was surprised. He had not expected the engagement arrangements to take place so soon, although he had heard talk of the traditional dinner at the bride's house, where the two families eat together. He got into his car and was about to head left down the road toward Anastasia's house when the thought suddenly struck him that he would need to exchange gifts with Anastasia at the engagement dinner. He turned his car in the other direction and floored the accelerator. The wheels screeched and the smoke from the burning tires rose into the air as Giorgiy hurried home for the gift.

"There goes that show-off Giorgiy with his hot GTO," said Mihail Chestnoslov as he started the motor of his Dodge Charger.

Anastasia smiled as she watched Giorgiy race away on what to her was her prince on a white stallion. She had fallen in love with him ever since that one day last summer when he drove up to Settlemeier Park in Woodburn in his new GTO, which he had bought with the hard-earned money that he had accumulated while working at a furniture factory. Giorgiy did not follow the path of the farmer nor the woodsman that his predecessors followed. He was carving out a path for himself through skilled labor.



Anastasia did not show her love for Giorgiy at first because of her innate shyness. But then one Sunday he asked her if she wanted to go for a ride with him. She was at a loss for words at first; but after he took her for a fast spin down one of the country roads, she knew that her heart belonged to him forever. She had seen some of the other Russian girls imitate the American way and sit close to their boy friends, and she did the same. That melted Giorgiy's heart, and from that day on he began to concentrate all his time and energy in courting Anastasia.

Giorgiy lived in the Turkish village of Bethlehem, and he did not have to drive far from the Sinkiang church, which was about a mile driving distance away. He ran up the stairs and into the house to the room which he shared with his brother Leonty. In the near future he would be sharing that room with Anastasia.

"Where are you hurrying to?" asked his mother Sofia, who was busy preparing блины/bliny (think pancakes with filling) and пирожки/piroshki (turnovers with meat filling) in the kitchen.

"I'm going to Anastasia's house," answered Giorgiy, "and I forgot about the gift which I have in my room."

"We're all going there," said his mother, "so what's the hurry."

"I think Anastasia's father wants to talk to me before the rest of you get there," said Giorgiy.

"Tell him that I will bring the ikon of the Blessed Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) for the blessing," said Pavel Golubin, who had overheard Giorgiy's voice and had hurried from his bedroom. He had been reading a holy book, and he was still dressed in his long black кафтан/kaftan (church robe).

"O.K. I'll tell him," said Giorgiy as he turned to go to his room.

"And tell him to prepare a candle," added his father, who was the nastoyatel (minister) to the Turkish group.

"I will," said Giorgiy as he ran into his room and went to his desk. He reached into the back of the bottom right-hand

drawer and pulled out a special box with a girl's wallet that he had bought for Anastasia. He knew that Anastasia needed the wallet to go with a purse she had bought for Easter; he also wanted Anastasia to have the wallet because he knew she would handle the finances and shopping for the family that both of them wanted to start on right away.

At Vasily Velikov's house, the three girls were busy helping their mother make пилимени/pilimeny (like ravioli) and котлеты/kotlety (meat patties). Anastasia was also responsible to cut up the cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, onions, lettuce and other vegetables for a big salad bowl. The girls worked in the kitchen while Giorgiy talked with the father in the living room.

"You are a healthy young man," began Vasily after his future son-in-law sat down on the sofa beside Vasily's wheelchair. "And you have a good-paying job. As you can see, I'm not able to do much for my family anymore, besides making leather belts to sell for a few dollars, ever since that tragic accident last year."

"I heard about it," commented Giorgiy. "Those trees are a risky business."

"You're right," said Vasily, who wanted to continue with his little speech. "It's fortunate for me that the girls are grown up and can start earning their own bread. Nadezhda has been working as a seamstress for a clothing store, and Anastasia wants to join her there. I know that the two of you will make enough money to buy your own little house after you're married, so you will both be well off. But that's not what I wanted to talk to you about. I'm concerned about my daughter and about her children. I know that America is a good and prosperous country--better than Brazil and China, where I lived for most of my life--but America is also a country of immorality and wickedness. I don't wish to see my daughter raise children that will follow American ways and lose their Russian heritage."

"I agree with you," said Giorgiy. Vasily didn't let Giorgiy say what else was on his mind. Instead, he continued with his accusation of American ways.

"In America there is much freedom and also much lawlessness," continued Vasily. "People are permitted all kind of immoral filth, and the schools teach our children that man comes from a monkey. Well, maybe the hippie and the American does, but not the Russian Old Believer. God created us in his image, and we wear our beards out of respect for that fact."

Vasily stroked his beard as he began to wander off into his favorite subject about beards. Giorgiy let his eyes wander away from the talkative Vasily to the kitchen, where he observed Anastasia standing at the cutting board like a grown woman and preparing food for her man. The thought of her in his kitchen cooking food for him made Giorgiy's heart skip a beat, and his face flushed pink from excitement. His head started turning in spirals, and all of a sudden Giorgiy felt dizzy.

"I need some air," said Giorgiy as he stood up. "Excuse me for a minute while I step outside into the fresh air."

"Go ahead," said Vasily, who had forgotten what else he wanted to say against the American way.

Anastasia ran outside after Giorgiy. They walked down the road together until they saw his father's car approaching. Then they turned around and went back to the house. Giorgiy had not intended to be rude to Vasily. He had only wanted to be alone with Anastasia.

Giorgiy's father began the ceremony when both families had gathered together in the living room. He had the young couple kneel before the ikon and a lit candle. They made several obeisances (bowings) to the floor, and then the father-nastoyatel (minister) asked if they wished to be married of their own free will. Giorgiy and Anastasia looked at each other and said, "yes," simultaneously. Pavel Golubin explained that the couple had received the parents' blessings to proceed with the wedding preparations, and he concluded with the statement that God's blessing would be given in church on their wedding day.

"Now let's see the gifts," said Sofia, as she came up to her son to congratulate him with an embrace and a kiss.

"Mama, go into my room and get the bag on my bed," said Anastasia. Zinaida hurried to get the gift.

"Leonty, there's a box in my glove compartment," said Giorgiy to his brother. "Go get it for me."

The two gifts were brought to the young couple. Anastasia took out a beautiful orange belt with green lines that criss-crossed to form a tic-tac-toe design alternately with a cross-framed window design.

"This is my favorite belt that I weaved myself," said Anastasia, giving the belt to Giorgiy. "It is for you to wear when you marry me."

"It's beautiful," responded Giorgiy, wrapping the belt around his waist on top of his own belt to try it on for size. He handed the gift-wrapped box to her as he started to tie a bow in the belt. "This is for you," he added in a shy manner. "Open it."

Anastasia opened the box and pulled away the white tissue paper inside to reveal a beautiful brown women's wallet.

"That's just what I needed," exclaimed Anastasia. She wanted to run up to Giorgiy and kiss him, but she held back her emotions in the presence of the parents.

"Look inside," said Giorgiy. He smiled to himself nervously as Anastasia unsnapped the wallet and looked inside.

"There's money in here!" she shrieked excitedly.

"How much?" asked her sister Nadezhda, who ran up beside Anastasia to see.

"There's one-two-three-four-five fifty dollar bills," announced Anastasia as she counted the grand bills one by one.

"My, what a wealthy man you're getting married to," said Anastasia's mother Zinaida. "You're a fortunate girl."

"He's been working hard at saving for this for over a year," explained Giorgiy's mother Sofia.

"Let's eat! I'm hungry!" cried Irina, who was milling around anxiously in the kitchen.

Everyone agreed. It was almost noon, and no one even had breakfast yet. The two families squeezed around two tables joined together, and the feast began. The talk around the table centered on the imminent wedding arrangements: the Golubin family were discussing the make-shift outdoor patio they would have to build in front of their garage to accommodate the many guests from both the Turkish and the Sinkiang groups that would come; the Velikov family discussed the "дивишник/divishnik" (nightly parties for the bride at her home); both families discussed the sharing of food preparations and expenses, the homemade wine-like drink called "бѣра/bѣра" that would have to be made, and the hog and livestock that would be slaughtered to provide the meat.

For the next two weeks Anastasia was busy with all the woman's part in the wedding preparations. She had to make "бантики/bantiki" (pin-on cloth corsets in the shape of a flower) for all her guests. She had her sisters help her make the "крѡссѡта/krossota" (wedding-cap) out of 30 small pink, red, and white flowery bows and a large bow in the back with a dozen colorful ribbons with all the colors of the rainbow which trailed down to the bottom of her dress. Her mother helped her sew a blue dress with groups of red apples, purple plums and oranges abundantly arranged on the pattern; for the apron, Zinaida made a bright red-violet silk one with white lace; on her white blouse Anastasia embroidered her own flowery red roses with buds growing out the sides to put on her shoulders. Her father Vasily bought Anastasia a jewelry piece to be used as a headband in front of the krossota. The jewelry piece consisted of four rows of 72 white glistening gems which Anastasia was to wear on her wedding day.

At night the young people and Giorgiy arrived. Giorgiy and Anastasia sat at a long table covered with a tablecloth of pink, violet, and purple flowers. Behind the attractive couple was a wall tapestry with a proud peacock with its eye-shaped feathers trailing behind her; in the background was a magnolia tree with its rosy-pink flowers in bloom, and

beside the tree was a lake with white water lilies near the shore and two mature white swans swimming gracefully side by side in the middle.

"Well, let's sing a song for our two love-birds," said Nadezhda. She was older than Anastasia by two years.

"You sing the songs, and we'll throw the kisses," said Petya Chestnoslov, who had been eyeing Nadezhda ever since he had walked in through the door. He had a glazy look in his eyes.

"Will you give as good a kiss as the song that we'll sing?" teasingly asked Nadezhda in response. She gave Peter a look of disapproval, for she disliked him ever since she had heard that he had started using drugs.

Petya blushed as the others laughed. The wit and humor continued to fly back and forth like a ping-pong ball at a tournament. Then there was a moment of silence.

Nadezhda took advantage of the silence, and she struck up a song in a raspy high-pitched voice. The other girls around the table who knew the folk song joined in. The song was about a young maiden who was leaving her girl friends to live with the man who came to marry her. The last couplet of each verse was repeated for emphasis and to make the song last longer.

Sometime after midnight the festivities began to subside as the guests began to leave in preparation for the next day's work. By Saturday, the day before the wedding, all the embroidery work, including new clothes for bride and groom and new curtains for the home they would live in after the wedding, was finished. The revelry came to a climax one last time when Anastasia and her girl friends went to the баня/banya (bathhouse), where the girls talked and laughed about Anastasia's future with Giorgiy.

On Sunday morning at 6:00 a.m., the church bells on top of the Turkish church in Bethlehem Village chimed in a two-tone dactylic beat to awaken the villagers and to call them to worship. The bells rang like an alarm clock for about thirteen minutes, then they stopped as suddenly as they had begun.

Five birds flew up to the cupola to see what all the excitement was about and then sat on the roof and waited. Several older folk hurried to the steps and crossed themselves three times before entering the sacred building. A white pigeon flew up to the roof and perched itself in a spot where it could watch the villagers assemble.

For an hour the regular morning service proceeded without any sign that a wedding was to occur that day. Shortly before the end of the service a chain of five people entered the full church and zigzagged through the crowd till it found a spot on the left side where there was room for the group of five. The two men and three women held a chain of five white handkerchiefs tied together. An older man, Giorgiy's крёстный/krostoniy (godfather), led the way; he was called the "тысячик/tysyachik" or spokesman. Giorgiy and Anastasia were in the middle, and two "свашки/svashki" (ladies) were beside Anastasia. The group made their customary three bows to the ground in unison, then they bowed and crossed themselves thrice as the morning service continued in its natural course.

Half an hour later the morning service ended, and almost all of the people vacated the premises except for the participants in the sacred ceremony, and the relatives and close friends of the bride and groom. They sat along the sidelines on benches. A few curious spectators stood at the back of the church.

"Тебе не стыдно/Тyebye ne stidno?" (Aren't you ashamed of yourself?) asked an older woman as Haritina peered in through the back door. She was shooed away.

Outside the church, the people sat on cars, talked, and walked around while the nastoyatel (minister), Pavel Golubin, read from his holy book about the Wedding of Cana, about the duties of husband and wife, and about the sacred commitment they were making to each other for the rest of their days on earth. The couple was separated from the chain for the ceremony. They kissed holy ikons to solemnize their vows; they kissed the holy cross to seal the sacred pact that they would not separate either in good or bad

times but would stand together; and they bowed and made поклоны/poklony (obeisances to the ground) before their parents. Anastasia also made an obeisance to the ground before Giorgiy to signify her servitude and loyalty to him as head of the household. The sweat poured down Giorgiy's face from the numerous poklony (obeisances) that they were required to perform. Anastasia had tears in her eyes throughout most of the ceremony, especially when her father Vasily repeated the words of the nastoyatel (minister) to the young couple and started crying himself.

Finally the chain was re-established, and the married couple, Giorgiy and Anastasia, followed a group of black-robed male chanters to Giorgiy's home. The male chanters sang a prayer of blessing at the steps of the house, and then the "духовный пир/dukhovniy peer" (spiritual feast) was officially in progress. The long tables under the make-shift building that Giorgiy and his father had constructed were equipped to seat over 200 guests, and there was plenty of food and бpara/braga (berry-wine drink) to make everyone full and happy for three days and three nights.

Giorgiy and Anastasia sat behind the center table like a king and a queen. Anastasia was wearing the jewelry headband that her father had given her, and it sparkled like hundreds of suns on the crown of her head.



## Wedding Cap



## Chapter 14 -- "Ascension"

"We finally sold our farm, and we'll be moving up to Alaska," announced Alyosha Chestnoslov to his friend Ivan forty days after the beginning of Пасха/Paskha (Easter). Alyosha had come over to Ivan's house for a visit.

"It's cold up there," said Ivan. "You remember Antip Svyatogorov? God rest his soul. Well, his wife Evgenia moved up there with five other families last summer, and she wrote later to Masha. In her letter she said she had to work real hard in a fishing cannery near their village, which they named after our patron saint, St. Nikola. I think she said the place where she worked was called Homer."

"What you're saying is true," said Alyosha, "and I also have received letters from friends saying that the fishing industry is very competitive and that they were thinking of building their own boats. But they also told me that there is a lot of construction work for me and for my three sons."

"Masha told me Evgenia wrote that the first families had to camp out in tents on a bed of gravel," continued Ivan. "There was a fire in one of the tents, and a girl was burned to death and her mother was scarred for life."

"I didn't hear about that," said Alyosha. "I was told that the men had begun building cabins out of the spruce wood that was located on the 640 acres of land they had jointly purchased. They also had to rent out some bulldozers to clear out an access road to Nikolaevsk Village from the nearby roads leading inland from Anchor Point."

"When are you moving up there?" asked Ivan.

"As soon as the papers are signed and we get our money from the title company," answered Alyosha.

"How does your family feel about moving to that cold country?" asked Ivan.

"My sons didn't want to move at first because they have many friends here," answered Alyosha. "Petya didn't want to go because, as Tihon told me later, he had all his drug connections here. That was one of the main reasons why I wanted to move away from this place. The dirty hippies are

swarming everywhere like flies on manure. Would you believe it, Petya wanted to grow his hair long like a girl. What is this world coming to?"

"What did you do when he wanted to grow his hair long?" inquired Ivan.

"I did like our holy book commands us to do," answered Alyosha in a stern voice. "I whipped him with a leather belt eighteen times."

"But he's twenty-one years old," said Ivan in a surprised voice.

"That's true," responded Alyosha. "But he lives in my house. And as long as he lives in my house, he will obey me and not bring filthy American customs into my Russian home." His face turned red with anger.

"Do you think he'll straighten out in Alaska?" asked Ivan.

"I pray to God he will," said Alyosha as a tear began to expand within his eye. "I'd hate to lose him or my other two boys to the temptations of this American world."

"I sympathize with your situation," said Ivan, "but I'd hate to be in your shoes. It's a long, hard road."

"I know," said Alyosha. He cast his eyes down on the ground as he thought of the long, hard road. "We'll have to rent a truck to move all our furniture and belongings. Petya and I will take turns driving it."

"What do you say we take a ride up to Mt. Hood one last time?" asked Ivan in a cheerful voice. He changed the subject because he saw that his friend was beginning to feel despondent. "We could invite Andrey Ribrov and his family. It'll be just like old times."

"Hey, that's a good idea," said Alyosha. "I'd love to see that beautiful mountain one more time before we leave."

"There was a light snowstorm two days ago," stated Ivan, "so we should have some nice snow to ride down the hill on the sleds with the kids."

"Tonight's the Ascension service, right?" asked Alyosha.

"So we can go tomorrow," said Ivan. "It's a holyday, and we won't be working. And Andrey won't have to go to the cement plant, either."

"And if we don't go tomorrow, which is Thursday," thought Alyosha out loud, "we'll have to wait till Saturday or Sunday."

"No, let's go tomorrow," said Ivan.

"Ладно/Ladno" (O.K.), agreed Alyosha.

That evening (the Orthodox Church had accepted the tradition of the Old Testament Church to begin the 24-hour period with the sunset of the previous day, and thus the evening service always belonged to the following day), the parishioners gathered to conclude the forty day Paskha (Easter) season. They chanted the "Resurrection of Hristos" liturgy three times to commemorate the glorious event that was in their hearts and minds ever since the beginning of the Great Feast, when they had affirmed with their mouths: "Hristos is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and bestowing life upon those in the tomb." The Paskha (Easter) decorations were still hanging on the eastern wall above the ikons and candles; there were five magnificent bouquets of flowers hanging across the wall, and between the bouquets was an eight-limbed Russian Orthodox cross with the initial "X" on the left side of the cross and the initial "B" on the right side of the cross; the initials signified "Христос воскрепе/Hristos Voskresye" (Hristos is risen).

Nikolai, who would turn twelve later in the year, was now allowed to read from the Holy Scriptures. He had mastered the technique of chanting the words in a rhythmic cadence as he read. He also now always carried to church a лестовка/lestovka (woolen-beaded rosary) and his favorite подручник/podruchnik (prayer cloth), which his крёстный/krostoniy (godfather) Vasily had given him two years ago. He never forgot what his godfather had taught him; each time he bowed to the ground and touched the red diamond-shape in the middle, he thought of Hristos; and each time he got up from his knees and saw the twelve triangular shapes which were formed by three expanding squares (which seemed to make an eighth of a turn to the right with each expansion in size), he thought of the twelve apostles. He had never found out, though, why the three

squares were green, pink, and purple with flowers, nor why there was a sky-blue background and then a yellow frame with flowers.

When the worshippers chanted the "исповедание православныя веры /ispovedaniye pravoslavniya veri" (profession of the Orthodox faith), Nikolai's voice rose like the sweet song of a nightingale above the other voices. He added a special amplification of volume when he came to his favorite section:

“И воскресшаго в третий день по писаниих;  
и возшедшаго на небеса,  
и сядуща одесную отца.  
И таки грядущаго со славою,  
судити живым и мёртвым,  
его же царствию несть конца.”

(On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory,  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.)

Each time Nikolai reached that section in the profession of the Orthodox faith, he pictured in his mind the scenes from the holy book which Simeon had given him as a gift after he had learned how to read with considerable skill and fluency. The holy book was about the visions of St. Vasily's disciple Grigory. Nikolai spent many hours looking at the pictures of heaven, and the one that he spent most time on was the colorful plate of Hristos seated in heaven on the right hand of the Father-God.

After the night service ended, the sun's golden rays could be seen spearing their way up over the snow-capped Cascade Range. It was a beautiful day to go on a drive to the majestic Mt. Hood, which could be seen from the Willamette Valley where the small rectangular-shaped church humbly stood. Andrey took his family of five in his new Plymouth station wagon; Ivan took his family of five in his new Ford camper;

Alyosha let his son Petya drive his family up to the mountain in his Pontiac Grand Prix. They drove about thirty miles on 99E along the Willamette River, then past Oregon City they started the steady climb for the remaining forty miles to the top.

When they reached Timberline Lodge, which looked like an ancient stone castle, they parked their vehicles and went to play in the freshly fallen snow. There was enough packed snow in places to ride the sleds and snow coasters that they had brought. The children began making snowballs and throwing them at each other. The women stayed together and watched, while the men played with the children until they were too tired to play anymore and decided to stand around and talk instead. Petya and Mihail disappeared somewhere behind the lodge.

"Masha," said Paraskeva as she zipped up her warm jacket. "Why didn't you tell me you were expecting a baby?"

"I didn't tell too many people," answered Masha, who was beginning to show.

"How many months are you along?" asked Varvara. She sneezed several times as she felt a cold wind blow down from the mountain.

"I think about five," answered Masha. "Anastasia found a lady doctor in Portland and she recommended that I go to her. I followed Anastasia's advice. The lady doctor is really nice. She told me I should have the baby toward the end of September."

"Is Anastasia expecting a baby, too?" asked Paraskeva in an astonished tone of voice.

"The last time we were over to the Velikov's house," explained Masha, "Zinaida told me Anastasia had gone to the lady doctor to see if she was pregnant."

"And what did she find out?" asked Varvara impatiently.

"She found out that there was a little embryo developing, and that she was three months pregnant," said Masha.

Just then little five-year-old Pasha came running up to Masha with tears in his eyes.

"Oh-ah," cried Pasha at the top of his lungs.

"What's the matter?" asked Masha as she took her boy into her arms to comfort him.

"Nestor hit me in the face with a snowball," screamed Pasha.

"Nestor!" screamed Paraskeva. "Иди сюда/Idyi syuda!" (Come here!)

Nestor was several years older than Pasha and he had taken advantage of his age and size to pick on Pasha for some fun. The other kids were bigger than Nestor, and he did not like feeling left out, so he had used the smallest person around as a scapegoat. The two mothers had their two boys apologize to each other, and in no time at all they were on friendly terms with each other again.

The men saw the minor infraction, but they thought nothing of it. Boys will be boys, they thought. Besides, they were too busy talking about Alaska to bother with the small stuff.

"I received a letter last week from Artemy Piatkin," said Andrey Ribrov, who kept his hands in his jacket. "He said they're starting to put power lines in, and pretty soon they will have electricity and all the conveniences of modern life that we have here."

"That's a smart fellow," commented Ivan. "Stick to the old ways, but don't give up the new if it serves a useful purpose."

"And he further stated," continued Andrey, "that the government there is very congenial to them. When the Kenai Peninsula Borough asked them why they wanted to live in Alaska, Artemy told them that they wanted to return to a community life of their own, to own land and homes, to live in harmony with neighbors, to protect the integrity of the old faith, and to raise children with a minimum risk of contamination from modern temptation."

"He told them all that?" asked Alyosha in amazement.

"He likes to talk a lot," said Andrey in a jocular manner.

"He didn't tell them that he had five daughters, and that he didn't want them fooling around with American boys," said Alyosha. "That's why he really went to Alaska."

"I heard he took to his heels because he thought 1966 was going to be the end of the world because it was 300 years since the 'проклятый/proklyatiy' (cursed) Nikon brought destruction to our people and our holy books back in 1666," stated Ivan.

"And last year before he left," added Andrey, "he told me that seven thousand years had passed since the creation of the world, and the second coming of Hristos could, therefore, come any day."

The men were interrupted by Varvara's loud shout.

"Alyosha!" she called from a distance of forty feet, where the women had been watching the discursive men and the frolicking children at the same time. "Where is Petya?"

"He went with Mihail to the lodge," yelled back Alyosha.

"Why don't you go find them," called Varvara. "It's getting cold for the children. We should be getting back."

Alyosha went to look for his two sons. He was not aware of them hiding behind the trees as he walked by them and went into the lodge.

"He's probably looking for us," said Mihail as fear gripped his heart when he saw his father. He passed the marijuana joint back to Petya and signified with a gesture of his hand that he didn't want any more.

"Don't be so paranoid," said Petya as he took the carefully rolled weed-stick and inhaled deeply. He had formed such a habit of smoking marijuana for the last three years that he was not able to break it any more. Once, when he was busted and had to sit in jail for six months, he thought of giving up the habit; but as soon as he got out and met his old smoking partners again, he was hooked again.

"Dad's gonna get mad at us," said Mihail. "I'm going back."

"Hold it a minute," said Petya as he tried to hold in the stupefying smoke and talk at the same time. "I need a couple more hits to get high."

By the time Petya took his couple more hits, his head was spinning in the clouds and he was totally lost to the world around him.



"Wow, this is heavy," exclaimed Petya as he closed his eyes and watched the whirling colors and forms in his mind. "I'm gonna stay here and trip out under this tree. You go back and tell them I'll be there in a couple of minutes."

"You're crazy," said Mihail. "Dad's gonna whip you again if he finds out that you're smoking grass again. And he'll get me for it, too."

"He's not gonna whip me no more," said Petya rebelliously with a smile on his face. "Next time he tries I'm gonna run away for good." Petya leaned back against the pine tree and allowed his mind to take him on an inner voyage of fleshly sensations and pleasures.

"Come on, let's go back before he returns," pleaded Mihail.

"I'd rather lay around here and think of the American chick I met last week in Salem," lustily said Petya as he felt a tingling sensation ascend up the back of his spine.

"I'm leaving," said Mihail. He left Petya in his euphoric state of mind.

Mihail did not dare tell his father that he had been with Petya. He lied and told him that Petya had gone off into the woods by himself.

It was an hour later when Petya meandered out of the snowy woods and came back to the waiting parents. The other two families had left, and Alyosha was angry at having to tell his friends that Petya maybe got lost when he knew down deep in his heart that he was somewhere getting stoned again. Alyosha reprimanded his son, but Petya just smiled back at his father with a blank look in his eyes.

Nine days later, Alyosha packed all his worldly possessions into a U-Haul truck and drove away with his wife and three sons to Alaska. He hoped that the 49th state would be a better place for his three sons. Petya hoped that he would be able to score on some good weed in the northern country as he sat behind the wheel of the big truck and sang "North to Alaska."

## Chapter 15 -- "Descent of the Holy Spirit"

В начале было Слово  
и Слово было у Бога  
и Слово было Бог.  
Оно было в начале у Бога  
Все чрез Него начало быть,  
что начало быть.  
В нем была жизнь,  
и жизнь была свет человека;  
и свет во тьме светит,  
и тьма не объяла его.  
Был человек, посланный от Бога;  
имя ему Иоанн.  
(In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
The same was in the beginning with God.  
All things were made by him;  
And without him was not anything made  
that was made.  
In him was life;  
And the life was the light of men.  
And the light shineth in darkness;  
And the darkness comprehended it not.  
There was a man sent from God,  
Whose name was John.)

Such was the liturgical reading on Thursday May 8, 1970 (old style), which was St. John Bogoslov's day. He was the apostle who was cherished by the Old Believers for presenting God the Word (Bogoslov) in his gospel. He was also recognized as the apostle to whom were revealed the "last things" or the "end times," which he had written down in a book called the "Book of Revelation." Nikolai became interested in St. John Bogoslov when his father told him that the visions of Grigory, the disciple of St. Basil, were similar

to the visions that were revealed to St. John on the island of Patmos.

After the service 12-year-old Nikolai asked his father to explain the "end times" that both Grigory and St. John had seen. He brought out his book with the pictures of the visions of Grigory.

"Is this what happens when the world ends?" asked Nikolai. He pointed to a picture in which the righteous judge sat on his throne in the sky and judged the people down below.

"Those saintly people you see in bright robes with haloes around their heads are the saints who suffered and died as martyrs for the cause of Hristos," explained Ivan.

"Were they Russian saints?" asked Nikolai, who had always heard that only Russian Old Believers would go to paradise.

"Yes," answered Ivan, who firmly believed that the true faith had been given to the Russian people to preserve for all generations. "They are the ones who had to suffer many years ago when our people first were persecuted in Russia."

"Tell me about it, please," asked Nikolai. "How was it in the beginning?"

"Let me bring you a book and show you how it was when our people were first called Old Believers," said Ivan. He got up from the sofa and walked over to a glass cabinet where he kept all his religious books. Meanwhile, Nikolai took the book of the visions of Grigory back to his room.

"What are you looking for?" asked Masha, who was rocking her seven-month baby to sleep in a reclining chair. Little Luba (short form for Lubov, Russian for "love") was holding on tightly to her mother's nipple with her strong jaws. She had been born just as the lady doctor had predicted--on the last day of September. "I'm looking for the book on the history of the fathers and martyrs of the Solovetsky Monastery," answered Ivan. His eyes scanned across the two rows of books.

"Vasily was looking at it the last time he was here," commented Masha in a soft voice so as not to disturb the baby. "I saw him put it back on the top shelf."

"Oh, yes, here it is," said Ivan as he looked into the far-right corner. He brought the book to Nikolai, laid it between their laps, and opened it up to page one.

"This is a picture of Simeon Deonisovich, one of the brothers who had a large number of Old Believers in their community, which was called Vygovskaya Pustinya (a wilderness near the river Vyg)," pointed Ivan. The scholarly author of the book on the Solovetsky martyrs was shown standing beside his writing table with the manuscript in his left hand. "He wrote years later about the siege of the monastery by the tsar's soldiers and the subsequent persecution."

Ivan leafed through a few pages and stopped at a picture of Russian soldiers on horses at the walls of the mighty fortress which stood like a bastion of the Old Belief on the shores of the White Sea.

"This is a picture of the soldiers trying to scale the walls of the fortress-monastery," pointed out Ivan. He turned a few more pages. "And this is a picture of the soldiers firing cannon balls on the walls. But each cannon ball would keep bouncing back like an arrow in circular movement. They tried to cut off supplies, but the Solovki Believers sent petitions to Tsar Alexei and pleaded with him to return to the Old Belief, which was the belief by which all Russian saints achieved saintliness and were saved. But he wouldn't listen, and he didn't accept their logical argument that if the church honored the saints, then the church should also honor the Old Belief and ritual that the saints observed. They also informed him that the new religious instructors were teaching a new, unheard of faith, as though the Solovetsky believers were some outlandish tribe knowing nothing about God."

Ivan turned a few more pages. "Here is a picture of the traitor Feoktist who showed the secret passageway into the monastery which was used at night to get supplies," said Ivan. He turned some more pages. "Here is a picture of the

soldiers hanging some of the Solovki monks when they finally defeated them on August 22, 1676. That's when they started torturing and killing them for the Old Belief."

Nikolai's eyes were wide open and his ears were tuned in to all his father was telling him. He began to feel hatred coursing through his blood for the government that had ordered the killing of the Old Believers.

"Why did they have to torture and kill them?" asked Nikolai. Ivan turned to a page with a picture of Tsar Alexei.

"See this tsar who is near his death here?" asked Ivan, pointing to a picture of a priest blessing the king with a two-fingered sign and saying the last rites for the dying king.

"Yes, I see," said Nikolai.

"This Tsar Alexei Mihailovich was a good Orthodox tsar before the cursed Nikon corrupted him with new Greek mixed with pagan Latin ways," said Ivan. "God punished Tsar Alexei for listening to Nikon; a week after the monastery fell into the hands of the soldiers, the king died. All because of the Ante-Hrist, the accursed Nikon." Ivan's tone of voice changed to show the disgust he felt toward the accursed patriarch. "We don't even permit pictures of him in our books because of the damage, destruction, and desecration he did to our holy books."

"Why did he do that to our holy books?" asked Nikolai.

"I'd have to take you back before the great raskol (schism) of 1666, when the Ante-Hrist appeared on Russian soil, as Ioann Bogoslov (John the Revelator) prophesied he would," began Ivan. "There was a great religious movement before all the trouble began. A group of believers called the 'Боголюбцы/Bogoliubtsy' (Seekers after God), or Zealots of Piety, as some called them, tried to put a stop to the heavy drinking, gambling, *скоморохи/skomorokhi* (musical entertainers with dancing bears), and all the evil that was spreading throughout the land. Then when Nikon became patriarch and head of the church in 1652, he tried to make everyone submit to his authority, including the tsar, whom he made bow before him as God's representative on earth. By submitting to Nikon's authority, Tsar Alexei was helpless

when Nikon started to revise the Russian holy books to make them conform to the Greek models. Some of the believers put up a fight to stop these changes; because of that, they began to be called 'Староверы/Starovery' (Old Believers) or 'Старо-обрядцы/Staro-obryadtsi' (Old Ritualists) for they continued to follow the belief of the old holy books and performed the church ritual and liturgy according to the way they had been taught by their forefathers."

"Couldn't they just get rid of this Nikon?" asked Nikolai.

"The ones who tried were deported and sent to Siberia," remarked Ivan. "One of the leaders, Ivan Neronov, was exiled along with the Archpriest Avvakum. Others were forced into jail or tortured and made to confess that the new way was the right way. The ones who submitted and accepted the Nikonian way became Nikonians, as we call them to this day."

"Why did Nikon hate the Old Believers so much?" asked Nikolai.

"Because they wouldn't submit to his authority and obey his ungodly laws," answered Ivan.

"What laws?" asked Nikolai.

"He tried to make all the people cross themselves with the Latin sign of the cross, like this," said Ivan, showing with his left hand the manner in which Nikon tried to force all Russians to cross themselves. He put the three middle fingers in a group and the thumb and small fifth finger together. Then he waved the sign away and showed the right way with his right hand. "This is the way we were taught, with two fingers grouped together to signify the two natures of Hristos, God and man, and two last fingers joined with the thumb to show the hidden nature of the Trinity."

"You mean the Old Believers were persecuted just for that?" asked Nikolai in amazement.

"There was much more that he tried to change," responded Ivan. "The Greeks made him go completely against the laws of our Стоглав/Stoglav (Hundred Chapters) Собор/Sobor (Council) of 1551, where all our Old Belief had been confirmed by the holy council of all the elders and

priests. Then when the Greeks took over at the Council of 1666 and sang "anathema" to our Stoglav, to our two-fingered cross, to our spelling of Isous without the extra 'e' after the first 'e' (I in Isous is pronounced like an 'e'), and after the Greeks denounced our entire Russian mission in the world as the Third Rome after the fall of the Greek Constantinople to the pagan Turks in 1453--well, after that there was complete opposition by the Old Believers. Can you imagine, the Greeks at the Council forbade 'The Tale of the White Cowl' and began destroying copies of it so that no one would know that Holy Russia was the place where the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit would be established."

Ivan stopped talking for a minute while he leafed through the book to show Nikolai another picture.

"Here is a picture of the monk Epiphany having his tongue cut out," said Ivan. "The priest Lazar is sitting on the ground. They had already cut off his tongue. And here is the Prophet of God Iliya (Elijah) standing beside Lazar, telling him to be a witness to God. Both were condemned by the Council and exiled with Archpriest Avvakum. Avvakum, however, was exiled without harm to Pustozersk (about a hundred miles from the Arctic Ocean in the tundra of northeast European Russia). There he wrote about the persecution of the Old Believers, and he says that when the Prophet Iliya told Lazar to be a witness, then immediately afterwards Lazar spoke again without his tongue."

"Why didn't they hurt Avvakum like they did the others?" asked Nikolai.

"Avvakum was an old friend of Tsar Alexei and the queen, and he had a faithful follower named Theodosia Morozova, who was a lady-in-waiting to the queen," explained Ivan. "They were able to influence the fate of the Old Believers for some time. However, Theodosia and her sister Eudoxia were arrested later for supporting the Old Believer movement, and both died in prison. Avvakum with Lazar and Epiphany were later burned at the stake because they continued to influence the Old Believers, especially

Avvakum with his many treatises and epistles which he wrote while in exile."

"You said something earlier about Иоанн Богослов/Joann Bogoslov (John the Revelator)," interrupted Nikolai, "that he prophesied about the Ante-Hrist. What did he say about the Ante-Hrist?"

"Do you remember those pictures of the Ante-Hrist and all those бесики/besiki (demons)?" asked Ivan.

"Yes, I looked at them a hundred times," answered Nikolai.

"Go get the book and I'll show you something," said Ivan.

Nikolai ran to his room to get the book which was part of his personal library.

"Why are you going to scare him with those pictures and that talk of Ante-Hrist again?" asked Masha, who had been listening quietly to what Ivan had been teaching Nikolai. The baby was sleeping in her arms. "You remember how he had those nightmares several years ago when you first told him about the Ante-Hrist."

"I remember," said Ivan. "But he's older now. And he wants to know. I think he'll be all right this time."

"Nikolai rushed back with the book. Ivan opened it to the page where a picture of a beastly man with fiery hair and beard was shown in a palace.

"This is the Ante-Hrist," stated Ivan, pointing to the mangy creature with two horns on his head. "The angel is showing him a scroll on which is written: Послание Господне к сатане глаголющи яко скончася царство твое (The Gospel of the Lord to Satan saying how your kingdom is finished)."

"Is that also Ante-Hrist?" asked Nikolai, pointing to a picture of the beast with wings being manually hurled out of a palace by an angel.

"Yes, it is the devil himself in the flesh," stated Ivan. "He is forced to vomit all the evil, destruction and anger, and all the poisonous uncleanness, untruthfulness and heresy that he spread during his three year rulership over all the earth."



"What an awful sight," said Nikolai. "It's making me sick just to look at it."

"Ioann Bogoslov prophesied that he would reign three years, and then Hristos would come and put an end to his kingdom," said Ivan, not paying any attention to Nikolai's pale face. "And Ioann prophesied that his mark would be the number 666. So when 1666 came about, every believer understood that the prophecy of the Ante-Hrist was being fulfilled in the Russian land and that there was a falling away of the faithful from the true faith, and the last Christian kingdom, Moscow--the Third Rome, had come to an end."

Nikolai grasped his mouth with both of his hands and quickly ran to the bathroom. He didn't quite make it to the toilet bowl, and he vomited his breakfast all over the linoleum bathroom floor.

"I told you not to talk about those ugly pictures," reprimanded Masha as she heard Nikolai vomit in a loud heaving, guttural sound.

"I didn't think he'd get sick from that," apologized Ivan.

"You should show him just the pictures of paradise," said Masha. "He's happy, and he doesn't get moody or sick, when he looks at those pictures."

"I know," argued Ivan, "but he needs to know about the evil things that he must avoid in his life in order to achieve salvation."

Masha didn't want to argue that point with her husband.

"Go help him clean up," she said in a commanding voice, as if to blame Ivan for the mess he had caused.

Ivan listened until Nikolai had finished heaving and expelling the toxic matter from his stomach a third time, then he went to get a mop and a bucket of hot water.

## Chapter 16 -- "Saint John the Theologian"

The next day was St. Nikola's holyday, May 9 (old style). It was based on the historical transfer of the relics of St. Nicholas. The celebrated event took place in the year 1087 when the people of Bari, in Apulia, Italy, organized an expedition to Myra in Lucia, where his remains and relics were. The people of this expedition stole the remains of St. Nicholas and fled with them to Bari, where they were received in great triumph and celebration on May 9, 1087. The foundation of a Basilica was laid to honor the popular patron saint, and many churches were built in his honor all over the Christian world, including Russia, where he became the national patron saint.

Nikolai came home from church with the feeling of nausea still with him. He couldn't forget how he had felt the previous day. He had never gotten that sick before, and he had seen those same pictures many times. Something about the evil in the world and about the killings of the Old Believers and the Ante-Hrist had combined to make him feel totally sick at the thought and sight of it all.

Later in the afternoon some guests came over, and Nikolai forgot about his sick feelings. Vasily, his godfather, always made him happy, and he still occasionally told a story from his repository of Russian tales. But today Nikolai wanted to ask Vasily about the history of the Old Believers. He wanted to find out more about the people his father had told him about yesterday.

"Дядя Василий/Dyadya Vasily" (Uncle Vasily), asked Nikolai, "could you tell me some stories about the Old Believers?"

"I told him about the persecutions at the Solovetsky monastery and how all the trouble started with Nikon," interjected Ivan, who wanted Vasily to know why Nikolai was curious about the Old Believers.

"What did your father tell you?" inquired Vasily, who rolled his wheelchair closer to the sofa where Nikolai was sitting.

"He told me that they killed and burned Old Believers at the stake for not obeying the church authority and for opposing Nikon and his changes," reported Nikolai. "He told me about Lazar, who had his tongue cut out, and Avvakum, who wrote letters about the Old Believers and was burned at the stake. And . . . "

"Oh, that Avvakum," interrupted Vasily with a laugh. "He was truly a fool for Hristos. I like that part in his autobiography where he writes that dancing bears and skomorokhi (traveling entertainers) with drums and lutes came to his village and he drove them out because, as he says it, he was zealous in the service of Hristos. He broke the skomorokh's masks and clubbed one bear senseless and let the other go."

Nikolai laughed with Vasily. Masha overheard the funny anecdote and laughed, also. At that moment there was a knock at the door, and Nikolai ran to the door. More guests were arriving. This time it was Giorgiy and Anastasia with their five-month baby. They both bowed to the ikons of the Blessed Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) and St. Nikola in the eastern corner of the living room. Then they turned toward the people in the room and said their greetings: "Здоров живёте/Zdorov zhivyotye" (May you live in good health). They were answered with the customary welcome response: "Милости просим/Milosti prosim" (We ask for mercy).

"There's something very wise about that Avvakum, though," continued Vasily after the greetings were exchanged. Nikolai had sat back down beside Vasily to listen to what else he had to say, while Giorgiy sat in a chair not too far away. "All joking aside, Avvakum said some words which I think sum up the main idea that guided the early leaders of the raskol (schism). He said: 'Although I am a foolish man and without much learning, I do know that all the traditions of the church handed down to us by the holy Fathers are pure and holy. I hold them unto death as I received them. I change nothing in the eternal truth. That which was laid down before our time, let it remain so forever and ever.' "

"He also said that Caraha/Satana (Satan) had obtained our radiant Russia from God that she may become red with the blood of martyrs," said Ivan, who suddenly recalled Avvakum's story about his vision of the Anti-Christ, in which the Anti-Christ himself admitted that he could only possess those souls who were ready to obey him and do evil works.

"He often quoted what the Scriptures said," said Vasily. "He said: 'We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.' I remember his favorite expression was: 'No cross, no crown.' "

"During his time many believers considered all government officials and church officials that followed Nikonian ways to be the servants of Ante-Hrist, who were working to destroy true Christianity," continued Ivan with his train of thought.

"Didn't Avvakum say that it was better to burn in a self-created fire in your home and save your soul than to follow the ante-Hrist way that Nikon established?" asked Giorgiy, who had been listening to the conversation and decided to make his contribution to it. He had established a material tie to Vasily, his father-in-law, through marriage with Anastasia; now he wanted to establish a spiritual bond with Ivan through friendship.

"Yes, I heard that many perished in fires set in their own homes because of his teachings," responded Vasily.

"I think that a lot of that talk about people burning in fires was made up by government officials," commented Ivan.

"How could that be?" asked Giorgiy. "My father told me that thousands set fires to their own homes and churches rather than accept the Ante-Hrist teachings and ways."

"Thousands were persecuted, killed and burned by government officials," corrected Ivan, "and then they said that the Old Believers did it to themselves."

"That makes sense," said Vasily, scratching his head.

"But my father said the age of Ante-Hrist had come and the end of the world was near," argued Giorgiy, "so many

Old Believers cleansed and purified themselves by fire in order to join Hristos before the Judgment Day."

"There might have been small groups who set the flames to their own home rather than die at the hands of their persecutors," conceded Ivan, "but most of the bloody work was done by the government officials, who were spurred on by heretical church leaders. Look at Avvakum and his friends Feodor, Epiphany and Lazar, who were burned by government order from Moscow on the 1st of April in 1682. Even though Avvakum might have preached self-immolation, he never set himself on fire, did he?"

The argument that Ivan used was flawless. He did not get any rebuttal from Giorgiy, who sat thinking about the fate of Avvakum and his friends.

"I think that it was worse during Peter's time, said Vasily, breaking the momentary silence and changing the subject to another time in history. "He made the peasants cut off their beards and adopt western clothes and customs."

"He was an instrument of God visited upon Russia for her sins," said Ivan. "It was all because of those Nikonian reforms. He was another Ante-Hrist, another westerner trying to uproot our old ways and our Old Belief."

"My father told me that the Turchany first left Russia when Peter the Great started persecuting the Old Believers and cutting off their beards," commented Giorgiy.

"That Ante-Hrist was trying to destroy the image of God in man," stated Ivan in an angry voice, "just like those Latinizers and westernizers."

"When our people left Russia," continued Giorgiy, "they took all their ikons and old ways to Rumania."

"Didn't the Turchany move into Turkey about two hundred years later?" asked Vasily, who wanted to hear Giorgiy talk more.

"My father said our people moved to Turkey in 1879. They farmed and fished for a living in Konya Province not far from the Taurus Mountains," remarked Giorgiy.

"Did your father ever tell you about the beautiful church of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul?" asked Vasily.

"I don't remember," admitted Giorgiy.

"Well, it was the most beautiful church, dedicated to the Wisdom of God (Sophia), that was ever built in the Byzantine Empire," said Vasily, "and when our Russian forefathers visited Tsargrad--that's how Constantinople was called in those days--they found that the glory of God was worshipped in a more holy way there than in any other church or religion anywhere in the world. That's when the emissaries reported back to St. Vladimir and told him to choose the Orthodox faith from Constantinople and from the Greeks as the national religion of Russia."

Vasily continued with the story of how the Christian religion was first carried to Russian soil from the Greeks and how the missionaries Cyril and Methodius provided the Church Slavonic books for the Slavic tribes.

Meanwhile, the women were having their own kind of fun in the kitchen. They were comparing Masha's seven-month-old Luba with Anastasia's five-month-old Stefan. They had finished talking about their experiences at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland, and Anastasia had finished showing Stefan's soft spot on the crown of his head, when she overheard Vasily and her husband Giorgiy talking about Turkey.

"He tells me a lot of stories about Turkey," said Anastasia, as her left ear tuned in to the conversation in the neighboring room. Nikolai walked into the kitchen for a drink of water.

"What kind of stories?" asked Masha, who was bouncing little Luba on her lap.

"There's this one story he told me of the king of Istanbul who was telling his people to leave the country because of some trouble that was coming," began Anastasia. "The people didn't believe him. 'I'm telling the truth,' said the king to his people. The king was eating a fried fish at the time. And one man said to him, 'If this fried fish runs away from your plate, then I'll believe you.' Just as he finished saying that, the fried fish got up and ran out the door."

"Ha, ha," laughed Irina, Anastasia's younger sister. "I don't believe it."

"Come on, this is true," said Anastasia. "It's in the holy book that Giorgiy showed me."

"And then what happened?" asked Masha, who wanted to hear the rest of the story. Nikolai stood by the sink with a glass of water in his hand and listened to the interesting story.

"As soon as the fish got up and ran out the door, the man who disbelieved ran to the church of Hagia Sophia and prayed 'Боже милостив/Bozhe milostiv' (God, be merciful). And then he began to run home. As soon as he ran out the church, the Holy Spirit came into the church and closed the door. People inside the church tried to open the big ten-foot doors. Every time someone tried to open the door they would either be blinded or they would fall down as if they were dead. Someone managed to make a small crack in the door. A whole line of people came to see what happened. Giorgiy says his mother went to see that sacred place inside the church when she lived there for several years, and she said people would come there, and through the crack in the door they would get a breath of fresh air, which they said was the Holy Spirit because of the miracles that happened there."

"I can't believe it," said Irina. "It's not true."

"Quiet, Irina," said her mother Zinaida, whose attentive face perked up at the mention of the word 'miracle.' "Did Giorgiy's mother have a miracle happen to her?"

"She said that the room where the Holy Spirit was smelled like sweet fresh air," answered Anastasia. "When she went there her throat was very sore, but when she crossed herself and went up to the door which sealed off the room, and smelled the sweet aroma as if it were frankincense, then she got well instantly and her throat didn't hurt anymore."

"Is the Holy Spirit still there to this day?" asked Masha, who peeked into the oven to see if her голубцы/golubtsi (stuffed cabbage) were ready.

"Giorgiy's mother said that several years after the miracle happened to her," answered Anastasia, "someone managed to open the door through the small crack that was in the door, and the Holy Spirit left. But she said she never knew what happened to her. All she knew was that she felt so good, like never before in her life."

"Do you know any other stories from Turkey?" asked Nikolai, whose interest in stories from Turkey was suddenly stirred up.

"Ask Giorgiy," answered Anastasia, "he knows a lot of stories from Turkey." Anastasia said her husband's name intentionally loud so that he would hear her. Giorgiy left the living room and walked into the kitchen.

"Did somebody mention my name?" he asked. His tall, robust manly figure towered over the women, who were seated around the kitchen table and eating sunflower seeds.

"Nikolai wants you to tell him some stories from Turkey," said Anastasia, as she reached into the bowl of sunflower seeds and grabbed a handful into her free right hand and placed the seeds in front of her on the table. She was holding her sleeping baby in her left arm.

"Sure," said Giorgiy as he grabbed an empty chair and sat around the table with the women. "Grab a chair, Nikolai, and sit beside me, and I'll tell you a few scary stories that my grandmother used to tell me before she died."

Nikolai ran into the other room and brought a chair back with him. He sat beside Giorgiy and listened to him.

"My grandmother Ksenia, who died in Turkey," began Giorgiy, "had only one cow and they didn't have enough milk. Someone was stealing milk from them, but they didn't know who. One day they thought of trying to see who did it. They lay down to sleep, and they heard someone milking the cow. My grandmother went to see, and she saw a shadow of an old lady with her hair all messed up and ugly. There was a gate there with a stick nearby to close the gate. So grandmother took the stick and started beating the old woman. 'Aaakh,' screamed the old woman in a loud shrill voice. And suddenly she turned into a white dog. The dog



tried to leap over the high fence that they had around the yard. Grandmother kept hitting it with the stick. Finally, just as the dog was about to jump over the fence, grandmother grabbed the фартук/fartuk (apron), which belonged to the old woman, and pulled it off of the dog. Then she said, 'Whose ever apron this is must be a колдуня/koldunya (witch).' Later a boy was leading his cow to pasture and he saw grandmother carrying the apron. He said, 'That's my grandmother's apron!' My grandmother asked the boy, 'А где баба/A gdye baba?' (And where's grandma?) He said, 'Она на печке лежит, хворает/Ona na pechke lezhit, khvorayet.' (She's on the brick-oven. She's sick.) Then grandmother knew who the witch was."

"Колдуны/Kolduny," said Nikolai, "why do you tell stories about kolduny (witches)?"

"In Turkey there's millions of колдуны/kolduny," answered Giorgiy. "There's another story about a man and his wife who were walking in the desert and a snake bit the wife. She screamed, 'A snake bit me!' The man wrapped her leg and they went to a village for help. He said to a villager, 'Oi, oi, a snake has bitten my wife's leg.' The villager, who was really a колдун/koldune (wizard), went to a nearby river and said some magic words, and then he washed the wound with the water and she was well again."

Giorgiy looked at Anastasia as he related the story, and she understood that he wanted her to remember the incident with the snake at the church.

"Tell Nikolai the story about your Дед/Dyed (grandfather) Epifan," said Anastasia. Masha got up to check on the голубцы/golubtsi (stuffed cabbage).

"My grandmother Ksenia told me this one years ago after he died," said Giorgiy. "When he was walking in the city, a колдун/koldune (wizard) came up to him and said, 'Take this chain and try to tie me up.' People had tried to tie him up, but nobody could, for each time they tied him up he would escape and the chains would fall off. Дед/Dyed (grandpa) Epifan asked, 'What's the matter here?' Then when he found out that the koldune was playing tricks on the people, he

started saying a prayer to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) real loud. The koldune said, 'Hey, old man, why are you shouting at me for?' He didn't know that Dyed Epifan was saying God's words at him. Then Dyed Epifan tied him up and then laughed, 'Ha, ha, ha, now try to untie him.' And he walked away. Nobody could untie the chains for Dyed Epifan's prayer was stronger than the koldune's trick."

"The голубцы/golubtsi (stuffed cabbage) are ready!" announced Masha. She pulled the stuffed cabbage with rice, vegetables and beef out on the table. The men in the living room smelled the tasty aroma in the air, and they quickly dropped their discussion and hurried into the kitchen.

## Chapter 17 -- "Transfer of relics of St. Nikola"

"Did you hear that Giorgiy brought a television into his new home in Woodburn?" asked Zinaida one hot Monday in early summer. She had come over to Masha's house after the church service which celebrated the Descent of the Holy Spirit fifty days after Easter.

"No, I didn't hear anything about them ever since last December when Anastasia got her baby girl, Katya," answered Masha. "We've been so busy on the farm, putting up the berries, and taking care of the new calf we got from our cow. You know how farm life is, always busy."

"Well, anyway," continued Zinaida with what she had started to say, "he bought this new Zenith color television. And when Simeon Raskolin, our nastoyatel (minister), heard about it, he came right over. He wanted to talk to Anastasia about the fact that it was against our religion to have a television in the home. 'Это грех/Eto grekh' (This is a sin), he told her. Giorgiy stood up for her and said that some of his Turkish friends were getting televisions and it wasn't grekh (sin) for them."

"Giorgiy said that?" asked Masha in disbelief. She couldn't believe that a good boy like that could suddenly go bad.

"I was there," stated Zinaida. "I heard it all. I dared not say anything against our nastoyatel (minister), though. He told Giorgiy in an angry voice, 'You have brought an idol into your house. It's like inviting the devil in.'"

"What did Giorgiy say to that?" asked Masha. She took up a dress she had been sewing for her two-year-old Luba.

"He said it was only a picture-tube," answered Zinaida, "and he tried to explain to Simeon how the image was transmitted through waves--I think he called them vibrations--in the air just like radio waves. Simeon couldn't understand all that new technology. Giorgiy, you know, has been studying electronics at night school."

"No, I didn't know that," responded Masha. She continued embroidering a flower design on Luba's dress while Zinaida continued with her report.

"Then Simeon said, 'The only images that should be in the home are the holy ikons that God has imprinted for us in order for us to be in communion with the saints, and not this hocus-pocus devil-stuff with unreal acting.' Giorgiy got mad at Simeon when he said that, and he said, 'If you don't like this, then you don't have to watch it. You can leave.' Simeon said he was going to talk to his father, Pavel Golubin, about the abomination he had brought into a house where God's ikons were."

"Did he go to Pavel Golubin's house and talk to him about the television?" asked Masha. She glanced from her work momentarily to look into Zinaida's eyes.

"Yes, he did," answered Zinaida.

"And what happened?" asked Masha. Her gentle blue eyes looked up and waited for Zinaida's reply. She saw a change of expression on Zinaida's small round face.

"Simeon told Pavel Golubin that Giorgiy would have to be punished for his *rpex/grekh* (sin)," answered Zinaida. "Pavel didn't want to excommunicate his son, but Simeon insisted that an example had to be set or else all their young children would go to the devil. Sofia told me she pleaded with her husband not to excommunicate Giorgiy, but he said Simeon was right."

"So now he isn't a *прихожанин / prikhozhanin* (parishioner)?" asked Masha, who began to sympathize with Zinaida, for her daughter's husband had become an outcast in the eyes of their society.

"He was a *прихожанин/prikhozhanin* (parishioner), but now he's *паганый/paganiy* (unclean, pagan)," said Zinaida. "Our *nastoyatel* (elder) told us we're not supposed to associate ourselves with nor eat at the same table with people that have sinned and become *паганые/paganiye* (pagans, outcasts)."

At that moment someone knocked on the door, and Nikolai, who had been sitting in the living room and

listening to Vasily tell his father the same story about Giorgiy that Zinaida was telling Masha, ran to the door to open it.

Giorgiy and Anastasia stood at the door. Little Stefan, who was not two-and-a-half years old, ran through the open door to his grandmother Zinaida. Giorgiy and Anastasia, who was holding seven-month-old Katya in her arms, were about to step across the threshold when suddenly Ivan came up to Giorgiy and looked him straight in the eyes with a stern look.

"Please don't come in," stated Ivan seriously. "You're not welcome here while you're outside the grace of the church."

"What?" asked Giorgiy in disbelief.

"You know our laws," continued Ivan. "If someone is excommunicated from the church he cannot associate with the believers until he has done penance and made a full confession before the church."

"I know the church law," said Giorgiy. "But you are like family to me, and Vasily, my father-in-law, is godfather to your son."

"That is true," responded Ivan, who kept his hand on the door and kept the young couple from stepping into the house.

"Ivan!" cried Masha, who had put Luba's dress away and decided to come to Anastasia's rescue. "At least let Anastasia in with the baby. You can go outside and hash this out between you and Giorgiy."

"No!" said Ivan, standing firmly behind his principles. "Don't get involved in this, Masha. If I let Giorgiy and his wife in, then I, as an assistant to the nastoyatel (elder), will be guilty of trespassing against God's law." Masha backed away, overwhelmed by what was transpiring in her house.

"God's law says you must love your neighbor as yourself," argued Giorgiy. He looked at Ivan with antagonism in his eyes, as if Ivan had suddenly become his spiritual enemy.

"I love my neighbor, and I love God," responded Ivan, "but I also fear God."

"Why fear God?" asked Giorgiy. Anastasia was becoming impatient and she nudged Giorgiy with her elbow. "Wait, Anastasia. I have something else I want to say to this man."

"We must fear God if we want to achieve our salvation and make it to paradise," began Ivan.

"Let me say something before I leave," said Giorgiy, cutting off Ivan before he could say anything else. "I'm sick and tired of all these laws and rules. No television, no meat from American stores, no movies, no Christmas trees, no this, no that. What good do all those rules and regulations do you, if you can't show love to your fellow-man?"

Before Ivan could answer anything, Giorgiy turned around and started back to his car. Anastasia called for Stefan to come with her, and then she followed her husband. Giorgiy rode away in a furious rage.

"Those people don't let me do any of the things I enjoy," said Giorgiy angrily. "All because of their old-fashioned religion."

"But it's our religion, too," said Anastasia, "whether we like it or not."

"You won't see me going to their church," stated Giorgiy, "not after being kicked out and treated like a dog. Worse than a dog, I'd say."

When Giorgiy got home he started to drink again. It was something he hadn't done since he got married. Something was starting to eat him up inside the innermost depths of his soul, like a worm in the core of an apple. On occasions he would go to a tavern in nearby Salem, where he would drink heavily as much vodka as he could consume to drown his sorrow and guilt. When Anastasia would complain about his drinking habits, he would beat her up.

"Isn't this the old Russian way?" he would say whenever he had humiliated Anastasia and beaten her into submission. "Doesn't it say in their books that the woman should submit to the husband?"

Anastasia would run away to her mother after such beatings. Before long, Giorgiy began to grow his hair long

like the hippie friends he was associating with in the taverns. Eventually they introduced him to drugs.

"I can't go on like this," cried Anastasia one night when she came home to her mother after another fight with Giorgiy. "He came home smelling like a pig. Then he started smoking marijuana right in front of me."

"He's gone down the wrong road," said Zinaida, trying to solace her daughter. "He'll come back."

Months passed, and Giorgiy suddenly disappeared for several days. When he came back home, he confessed, after persistent probing on Anastasia's part as to his whereabouts, that he had been staying with an American girl in Salem.

"Get out of my house," yelled Anastasia, whose patience with Giorgiy had run out. "I'm through with you."

Giorgiy was too stoned to think or react. He just drove away without packing or taking anything with him. Several days later, when he came back to take his belongings, Anastasia announced that she wanted to divorce him.

"But I thought your religion doesn't allow you to divorce," said Giorgiy sarcastically.

"I'll probably get excommunicated, also," said Anastasia. "But I can't go through this hell with you anymore."

Giorgiy's moral feelings and conscience had worn thin, and he no longer cared what happened. His awareness of life was limited to drugs, drink, and debauchery. His feelings for his children were also insensitive. He was estranged to all his family and former friends. Existence took on a blurry aspect for him, and he saw everything in the form of shadows, ever-changing from moment to moment. He seemed possessed with an inner drive to explore all the caverns and pits of the underworld that he had entered. He stumbled and fell many times on the stony road amongst souls who were also lost in the maze of life.

It was a year later when Giorgiy chanced upon Andrey Ribrov in one of the taverns that Giorgiy frequently visited when he made his rounds in search of something he himself wasn't sure of.

"Giorgiy Golubin," said Andrey as he looked at the long-haired bearded face which he hardly recognized. "Is that you?"

"And who are you?" said Giorgiy with a sharp tongue. He cleared his throat.

"I'm Andrey Ribrov," said Andrey. He got up and sat on the stool next to Giorgiy. "I heard about you."

"What did you hear about me?" asked Giorgiy in a slurred raspy tone of voice.

"I heard that your wife divorced you," said Andrey, trying to be friendly. "She's having a hard time making a living with her embroidery ever since you left. She has to leave the children at home with her mother while she works."

"Don't lay a guilt trip on me," said Giorgiy. "I didn't leave. She kicked me out. All those people kicked me out as if I were no better than a dog."

"Tell you what," said Andrey, "why don't you come over to my house and get cleaned up. I have an extra room next to the barn. You can stay with us until you can get back together with Anastasia."

"We're divorced," stated Giorgiy.

"Maybe in the eyes of the civil law," said Andrey. "But in the eyes of the church you're not. What God has joined together no man, nor law, can separate."

"By the way, what are you doing in a place like this?" asked Giorgiy.

"I like to have a shot of vodka once in a while myself," confessed Andrey. "My wife would scream at me at home if I tried to drink anything stronger than braga (home-brewed berry wine) or an occasional beer, so I sneak away whenever I get the urge. Just don't tell anyone you saw me here, O.K.?"

"Agreed," said Giorgiy. "You sound like a reasonable man. I haven't met any Old Believers like you. Most of them judged me as an outcast and won't have anything to do with me."

"That's because they were brought up that way," explained Andrey, "and they observe all the church laws and rituals as if their life depended on it. I'm different because



I'm an easy-going fellow, and I try to get along with all the people I meet on the path of life. After all, one of these days I might be in your shoes and you might be in mine. That's how life is."

"That's an interesting point-of-view," said Giorgiy. "I think I'll take you up on your offer and come home with you, if you'll accept me just as I am."

The next morning Giorgiy woke up in a little room that was attached to the barn. He had a large splitting headache, and he went to the house to wash his head with cold water. The back door was left open in case Giorgiy needed to use the bathroom during the night. Giorgiy opened the screen door, then the old creaky back door, and he quietly tip-toed through the back porch, where all the clothes, boots and shoes were scattered. Giorgiy opened the door to the kitchen and was just about to turn towards the bathroom, when he heard someone praying in the living room. He walked quietly up to the threshold and peeked in. He saw Andrey praying in front of the ikons in the eastern corner of the room. He stood and listened to the prayer he hadn't heard in years.

Andrey prayed:

“Царю небесный, утешителю,  
душе истинный, иже везде сии,  
и вся исполняя,  
сокровище благих, и жизни подателю,  
прийди и вселися в ны,  
и очисти ны от всякия скверны,  
и спаси блаже душа наша .”  
(O heavenly king, O Comforter,  
the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere  
and fillest all things,  
the treasury of blessings and giver of life,  
come and abide in us,  
and cleanse us from all impurity,  
and of thy goodness save our souls.)

Giorgiy fought back the tears that all of a sudden welled up in his eyes. He turned around and walked into the bathroom, where he tried to wash away the tears that were pouring out of his eyes like a spring of living water. Something bitter and hard was exploding in his heart, and he rushed out of the bathroom and out the back door as quickly and quietly as he could. He wanted to let the dam of resentment and antagonism break loose and wash away his past two years that he had spent going through hell on earth.

He got into his car and drove up to the mountains, where he could spend some time alone. His head reeled from the sobbing as he drove on the curvy road along the Clackamas River. It seemed as if his entire past life was haunting him like a giant phantom, and he was hopelessly trying to run away from it. After stopping at a campground beside the river and watching the flow of water downstream for several hours, Giorgiy finally calmed down enough to go back down the same road to face the friends he had left behind.

When Giorgiy came back to Andrey's house, it was past lunch time and the Sunday meal had already been eaten. Some beardless guests had come over to talk with Andrey.

"Giorgiy, these are some Russian people who have come from California to live in Oregon," said Andrey, introducing Giorgiy to two men in American clothes.

"My name is Ioasaf Otstupnikov," said the older man, who was bald down the middle of the head.

"My name is Iakov, but people call me Jack--that's my American name," said the younger man, who was about Giorgiy's age. He got up to shake Giorgiy's hand. "My dad and I have come to get acquainted with the Old Believers."

"You say you're not Molokans?" asked Andrey, who continued where he left off when Giorgiy walked in through the front door. Giorgiy sat down on a chair and listened.

"No, we're Pentecostals," stated the father. "We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and talking in tongues."

"We also believe in the Holy Spirit," said Andrey. "The second council at Constantinople in 381 A.D. set down the teaching and article of faith which we pray in church: 'И в

духа святого господа истиннаго и животворящаго, иже от отца исходящаго, иже со отцом и сыном споклоняема и сславима, глаголавшаго пророки.' (I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and together glorified, he has spoken through the prophets.)

"In the Bible it says," said Jack as he opened his Bible and quickly found the passage he had underlined in an Old Testament book, "here in Joel 2:28: 'And it shall come to pass afterward (in the last days, interpolated Jack), that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.' That talks about the Holy Spirit that came upon the apostles after Iesous ascended into heaven and when they started talking in tongues, in other languages."

Andrey winced when Jack pronounced the name Iesous with an extra "e" sound, but he did not comment on it.

"And people in our church talk in tongues when they get filled with the Holy Spirit," added Ioasaf.

"That's strange," said Giorgiy, who broke his silence. "I never heard anything about that before. You mean you actually start talking in another language?"

"You should come over to our church sometime," said Jack. "Or to our prayer meetings. That's when the Spirit usually comes down and fills us, and we speak in tongues."

"We didn't build a church, yet," explained Ioasaf. "We're meeting in my house until we can build a church, hopefully in a year or two."

"That reminds me of the way we used to hold church services in China," said Andrey.

"Why did you come to Oregon from California?" asked Giorgiy in a matter-of-fact tone.

"We felt the Lord's call to come and minister to the Old Believers," said Jack in a direct reply.

"You mean try to convert them to your religion?" asked Giorgiy, who was beginning to feel defensive about the religion he had abandoned.

"Well, ah," stammered Jack, as he tried to find a suitable answer to the direct question, "we feel that we are saved because we accepted the Lord Iesous Hristos as our personal savior, and therefore we don't need ikons to pray to." Jack pointed to the ikons in the corner of the room with an accusing finger.

"My dear friend," said Andrey in a friendly tone, "if you are trying to convert us, you've come to the wrong house. I've met other Molokans like you and you all think your religion, which you acquired from the Roman Catholic west, is better than the true Russian Orthodox faith which has been preserved in its true spirit by our Old Believer tradition."

"But we are not Molokans," said Jack defensively. His father sat quietly and tried to think his way out of the uncomfortable position his son was putting them into.

"We call all Protestants by the name Molokans," explained Andrey. "Anyway, our ikons are not what you think they are. Our ikons are a window into heaven for us, a way of contacting the saints who are always with us, interceding for us and helping us achieve our salvation just as they achieved their salvation."

"Ah, I want to say something before my son here gets too carried away," interrupted Ioasaf Otstupnikov. "I know my son is burning with a fire and zeal to convert you Old Believers, but I came here with a different mission."

"What is that?" asked Andrey. He turned his attention to the kind man who spoke excellent Russian, although not of the same dialect as the Old Believers.

"I used to be an administrator of a Russian school in California," said Ioasaf. "And I wonder if the Old Believers would allow me to start a Russian school here for them."

"As long as you don't try to convert us," said Andrey with a laugh in his voice. "Our people have always wanted to preserve the Russian language, and if you want to help us in a sincere way, then we'll gladly cooperate with you."

"That sounds fair to me," said Ioasaf, who realized that converting people wasn't his special ability anyway.

"There's one thing you'll have to do if you want to work with our people," said Andrey with a smile on his face.

"What's that?" asked Ioasaf.

"You'll have to grow a beard," said Andrey.

The strangers had somehow managed to leave Andrey's house as friends. Ioasaf felt that his mission to Oregon was well on its way to becoming fulfilled. Jack Otstupnikov, on the other hand, felt like he had been given a slap on the face by the very people whom he had come to save.

## Chapter 18 -- "Birth of St. John the Baptist"

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' " read a minister in a white linen robe from a Bible that he was holding in his left hand. With his right hand he pointed his index finger up to the source of his faith that was high in the heavens.

The small group of Pentecostals that had gathered on the banks of the Molalla River on July 7 (June 24, old style), 1974, were not aware that they were being watched by two curious Old Believers. Andrey Ribrov and Giorgiy Golubin had heard about the baptismal service from Jack Otstupnikov several days after their first encounter. Jack had invited them to come and see how they observed the ritual of baptism, and Andrey had declined at first on the grounds that an Old Believer was not supposed to go to a church of another faith or listen to any heretical teachings. But when Giorgiy told Andrey that they could watch from a distance and they wouldn't have to enter the unbelievers' church, Andrey agreed to go.

"Do you hear what he's reading?" asked Giorgiy, who was straining his ears to hear the minister's voice amidst the sound of the river rushing downstream.

"He's reading the part about a voice in the wilderness," said Andrey, who was familiar with the old Church Slavonic version.

"How many people are there in white robes?" asked Giorgiy. He strained his eyes to count a group of people standing in a semi-circle beside the minister. The remainder of the people, who were not dressed in white robes, gathered around the select few.

"I count seven," said Andrey.

"With the minister, that makes eight," said Giorgiy.

"Three are men, and four are women with white headscarves tied around their hair," observed Andrey.

"He stopped reading, sh!" exclaimed Giorgiy. "Let's listen to what he's going to say."

"We are gathered together under the open sky on this beautiful, clear Sunday afternoon to witness an event that marks the beginning of a new life for each one of our candidates," began the young, tall minister in a loud voice. "This will be a moment in each one of their lives which will be written in the Book of Life as the day when they signified by the act of baptism that they had accepted Christ as their savior. By submitting to the symbolical burial with Christ in the river, as he taught by his example at the river Jordan, each candidate accepts the responsibility of death to the world and to the sin of the world; and when the candidate rises again with Christ out of the water, he accepts the duty of the sacred vow that he utters, 'From henceforth I will live a Christ-like life.' "

Giorgiy suddenly switched his ears off as his attention was drawn to a woman walking down the hill with a young man in a beige suit.

"That looks like Anastasia," said Giorgiy. He hadn't seen her in over a year, ever since the divorce was finalized. "What is she doing here?"

"I didn't want to tell you before," confessed Andrey, "but I knew about Anastasia and her new boyfriend from the Molokan group here for some time."

"Why didn't you tell me? Who is that guy?" asked Giorgiy. A fit of jealousy seized him and he grabbed a dry limb with fading brown leaves from a nearby tree and snapped it off in anger. Two children who had been playing in the back of the crowd heard the noise in the bushes and came to investigate.

"Quiet!" said Andrey. "Look, you gave us away. Shoo! Go away." The two children ran to tell their parents when they saw the bearded Old Believers.

"We'd better leave before someone comes and asks us what we're doing here," said Giorgiy.

"They might try to capture us and baptize us together with the other seven," said Andrey jokingly. They both laughed.

As they started climbing up the hill overlooking the clear waters of the Molalla River, the minister began leading the seven candidates for baptism slowly into the cold river. The people sang a song as the minister said a prayer over each candidate individually and then pronounced the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The candidate was plunged under the cold surface of the river and then seconds later was brought up dripping wet, gasping for breath, and rubbing the eyes with both hands in order to see again. Andrey glanced at the scene from the top of the hill for a minute before he turned away with Giorgiy and headed up the road to the parked car.

"Tell me about this guy with Anastasia," said Giorgiy when they had gotten back to Andrey's car. "What do you know about him?"

"My wife told me that Masha told her that Anastasia's mother fainted one night after Anastasia had cut her hair and had started going out with this older man who was divorced and had two of his own children," said Andrey.

"Did Anastasia tell her mother about this guy?" asked Giorgiy. "Is that why her mother fainted?" Giorgiy opened the window as Andrey started driving back to the highway.

"From what I heard," said Andrey, "her mother fainted when Anastasia told her that she had left our faith. But you know how rumors spread, and how women blow the truth out of proportion sometimes."

"What is that guy's name?" asked Giorgiy. "Do you know?"

"His name is Vladimir Derevyeff," answered Andrey, "but I think he uses an American name as his first name. I can't remember what it is."

Giorgiy felt the roof cave in on his world. He had hoped to go back to Anastasia and make amends with her. He had thought much about her ever since that ride along the Clackamas River when he realized the harm he had done to himself and to his family. He tried to purify his mind and body from his past and from his bad habits. He had stopped smoking and drinking. He had even gone to a barber shop to



cut off his long curly locks. Everything had started to look bright and rosy for Giorgiy again. And now suddenly he felt the same oppressive spirit, that had haunted him for the past two years, come over him again.

"Damn it!" swore Giorgiy. "Why do I get all the bad luck in the world? Am I being punished for my sins?"

"We live in a funny country," said Andrey, trying to find a logical reason for Giorgiy's sorrow. "There is all kind of freedom in America, even freedom to divorce. We never even heard of the word back in China. I remember my father telling me that God made a woman to be a companion for man all the days of his life."

"It's all my fault," sobbed Giorgiy. The bright future that he had envisioned for himself and Anastasia had flickered out like a candle in the dark, lonely night. "None of this would have happened if I hadn't started drinking and beating her up."

"Well, at least you're aware of where you went wrong," said Andrey. "You know, the old Russian proverb says, 'Что посеешь, то и пожнёшь/Shto poseyesh, to e pozhnyosh' (what you sow is what you will reap). That's what all the saints have taught us."

Giorgiy looked out the window at the farmlands that Andrey drove past at 65 miles an hour. Life seemed to be passing him by, and he fought back the bitterness and the tears that were battling to come to the surface of his eyes. He tried to look at the beauty of the berry fields that were spread out in even rows, and the corn and the wheat that was springing up all over the fertile soil of mother earth. Somehow he felt like an abandoned child, and he yearned to come back to the bosom of the mother church. Yet he was inwardly confused.

'Why weren't my prayers answered, and why wasn't I forgiven?' thought Giorgiy to himself as he stared out the window. 'I was trying to make it right with the church, and I was going to try and make it right with my former wife. Why didn't it work?' He recalled the prayer of repentance that he had said over and over until he could think of nothing else:

“Ослаби остави, отпусти Боже согрешения моя, вольная и невольная, яже в слове и в деле, и яже в ведении и не в ведении, яже во уме и помышлении, яже во дни и в нощи, всями прости яко благ и человеколюбец.” (My weaknesses forsaking, free me O God from my sins, willful and unwillful, those in word and in deed, those I see and those I don't see, those in the mind and in my thoughts, those committed during the day and those at night, forgive me for all, for you are gracious and you love all mankind.)

"Listen, Giorgiy," said Andrey after driving for several miles in total silence. "Don't feel so bad. Maybe Anastasia will give up on this new boyfriend of hers after she hears that you want her back."

"I don't think she'll ever take me back after what I've done to her," answered Giorgiy in a voice that seemed to sound the death knell for him and Anastasia.

Meanwhile, Anastasia was trying to forget her own bitter past and find a better life for herself in America. She tried not to think about Giorgiy nor about the Old Belief that she was forced to leave because of the divorce. She had found some friends from the Molokan (Pentecostal) group, and before long she was going to their church services. It was strange for her at first, because she was so used to standing in a church with candles burning before holy ikons; and here she was in a church where only a large cross on the front southern wall of the newly built church signified that it was a Christian church. Her first shock came at a Sunday night service when a traveling evangelist preached about the baptism by fire, and he had read something about Christ coming to John at the Jordan River and about John later telling the people, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Afterwards, she watched the young people flock to the altar to pray for the gift of tongues, and she watched and listened in amazement as a woman her age stood up from her knees and started speaking in an unknown tongue: "Ha re ka, Sham ba la." Anastasia was frightened by the strange outburst of energy that surrounded her, and she walked out of the

highly-charged atmosphere. That's when she saw Vladimir standing in the foyer of the church. He smiled at her and started talking with her. She was amazed at his good grasp of the Russian language, and he started telling her that his parents had come from Russia through China and then to California, where they settled near San Francisco.

From that moment on Anastasia took a liking to the man who treated her like a lady. She was astonished at the way Vladimir would open the car door for her and take her out to fancy restaurants. Within six months she was walking down the aisle in a white wedding gown in an American church; Vladimir wasn't permitted to marry in his own Russian church because he was divorced, and his church didn't allow divorce nor second marriages (something they held in common with the Old Believers).

When Giorgiy saw Anastasia one last time before he moved to join a group of Old Believers in the Peace River Valley in Alberta, Canada, Anastasia was already married to Vladimir, and it was too late for Giorgiy to attempt any reconciliation with her.

It happened on a hot midsummer's day around the season of the summer solstice, when a caravan of cars, campers, and vans followed the meandering road through Mt. Hood National Forest to Austin Hot Springs. People from all walks of life and from various religions and beliefs gathered there to bathe in the hot pools that formed in one special spot along the upper Clackamas River. Giorgiy had come in the morning with Andrey in the new green Dodge van that Andrey had recently bought. Anastasia arrived later in the afternoon with Vladimir and their combined families, two older girls from Vladimir's previous marriage and Stefan and Katya from Anastasia's previous marriage. Ivan and Masha were also there; and so was Jack Otstupnikov and his family. Later, an old acquaintance of Andrey's, Moisey Bogdanov, the Molokan friend who helped Andrey when he first came to America, also arrived to bathe in the cleansing, therapeutic hot waters. All in all, with the Americans and with a group of motorcycling, beer-drinking hippies that arrived toward

evening, it was a motley group of people which gathered at the river. They seemed to be a microcosm of the entire society of America, a picture in miniature of the various groups which came to find a better life in a state called Oregon.

Anastasia set the table underneath the tall pine trees in the daytime campground beside the hot springs while Vladimir prepared the chicken barbecue. After the meal, they walked with their children to enjoy the hot waters. Anastasia was dressed in a fashionable two-piece bathing suit. As she passed by the other picnic tables, she attracted the attention of several Old Believer families. One of the families that watched Anastasia walk in her two-piece bathing suit was Ivan and Masha.

"Would you look at that," said Ivan when he recognized Anastasia. "Isn't she ashamed of herself?"

"She's now like the *паганые/paganiye* (unclean) Americans," said Masha, who watched with accusing eyes. "She has no shame left."

Nikolai came walking up at that moment with two pan-size trout. "Look what I caught," he said. He had grown tall like his father; he was seventeen years old now and he had grown to his full height of six feet tall.

"I want some fish," said eleven-year-old Pasha. "I'm hungry." Ustina and Luba also came running up to their big brother to see what he had caught. Nikolai showed off his rainbow trout to all his friends who gathered around him to admire the ten inch trout.

"You children go to the hot waters and play around while I prepare the fish and a salad," said Masha. "Ivan, will you go with little Luba and Ustina and watch out that they don't get burned in the hot water? I heard an American girl got her feet burned this morning when she stepped in the first pool."

"I'll be careful," said Ivan before Masha could say her usual words of warning. He took the two girls by the hand and went with them to the hot pools.

"Hello, Ivan, over here," called Andrey when he saw Ivan step on the hot rocks with his sandals. Andrey was sitting in

a pool up to his chest. Paraskeva, Andrey's wife, was sitting on a large rock in her dress and dangling her feet in the water up to her modestly covered knees. Giorgiy was stretched out in the water with only his bearded head visible. When Ivan saw Giorgiy he hesitated at first, but then he stepped in to join the gathering of Old Believers in the segregated pool. The children went to a cooler pool closer to the river to splash around, throw stones across the river, and catch little guppies.

Giorgiy watched Anastasia splashing water on her naked shoulders several pools away, and the old desire started to rise within him. He couldn't stand the pain that surged through his heart and soul, and he got out of the hot water, went to the cold rushing river to cool off, and then went back to the picnic table. Anastasia saw Giorgiy leave the hot springs area, and she was glad, for she no longer felt sorry for him, nor did she desire to ever see him again.

"Здравствуйте/Zdravstvuyte" (hello), said Jack to Andrey, whom he recognized as he came to the pool. "May I join you?"

"Certainly," said Andrey. He moved over into Giorgiy's vacated spot to let Jack Otstupnikov into the pool. Ivan watched the newcomer with suspicious eyes.

"My name is Jack Otstupnikov," said Jack, extending his right hand to Ivan, whom he had never met before.

"They call me Ivan Bogolubov," responded Ivan without extending his hand. His cross hung on a string around his neck and down his hairy chest.

"I see you listened to my advice and grew a beard," said Andrey in a friendly manner.

"My father started growing one when he opened up the Russian language school," explained Jack. "He told me that if I wanted to be accepted by your people I would have to grow one, too."

At that moment Moisey Bodganov came walking carefully over the irregularly shaped rocks. He also wore a beard.

"Andrey Ribrov!" exclaimed Moisey when he saw his old acquaintance. "I haven't seen you in years."

"It's a small world," said Jack, as he sought recognition from the newcomer.

Within minutes the men were introduced to each other, and they began discussing first the weather, then world events, and finally religious and moral issues.

Masha had come to join Paraskeva on the rocks. They dangled their white legs in the water and talked about the shameful American women who were wearing almost nothing to cover their bodies. The heat from the sun and from the steaming pools made it uncomfortable for the Old Believer women, who felt it shameful to uncover their bodies as the Americans and the Molokans (who imitated them) did. And yet, their eyes kept roving secretly to a pool where American girls were flirting with beer-drinking hippies.

"Look, Mama," said Ustina. She came up to Masha with cupped hands. "I caught a little fish."

"Let it go," said Masha. "It wants to live."

Ustina looked at the little one-inch fish in the palms of her hand for a moment and then she let it go back into the pool. The little fish darted back into the cool water near the river.

"Ivan, let's go eat," called Masha after she got tired of sitting at the edge of the pool. "Pasha, Ustina, Luba. Let's go."

Masha gathered her children together like a mother hen gathers her chicks, and she led them to the picnic table. Nikolai was already there, munching on potato chips and other snacks bought from the store.

## Chapter 19 -- "Saints Peter and Paul"

In a certain town near Woodburn named X. on the summer holyday commemorating the great apostles of Christianity, Saints Peter and Paul (June 29 O.S. / July 12 N.S.), a family of twelve named Eroeff was moving from a tiny trailer home in Mt. Angel to a roomy berry farm. The father Efrem and his wife Vera had left the youngest children with Zinaida Velikov, who was Vera's sister, while the older children Alex, Feodora, Evdokeya, and Nikita helped with the moving. Ivan and Nikolai came with their pick-up truck to help move the furniture and belongings.

"You got yourself a nice berry farm," said Ivan to Efrem as they carried the large sofa into the old farm house. "How many acres of berries do you have?"

"I have ten acres of berries," answered Efrem. "And there's another five acres where I want to plant cauliflower for a fall harvest."

"You have a lot of work cut out for yourself," said Ivan.

"My oldest boy Alex helps me with the heavy stuff," said Efrem. "You know, I've been working for ten years now, ever since we came from Brazil in 1967 and were given that tiny trailer home to live in. I admit that we're still poor, but at least now we don't have to go running from farm to farm to pick berries, cauliflower, and strawberries to make a living like we used to before. Last year, Vera and Feodora even worked in the hop fields while Evdokeya took care of the children at home just so we could get the rest of the money that we needed for a down payment on this farm. But this year she just recently had our tenth child, and she's nursing it and isn't able to work in the fields yet."

Efrem kept talking rapidly about his many problems. Nikolai was helping Alex and Nikita unload the kitchen table and chairs. The girls, Feodora and Evdokeya, were unloading boxes of clothes and kitchen utensils. Vera was carrying the crying newborn baby, Anatolia, and trying to put her to sleep so she could help put the things in their right places. Zahar, Evlampy, and Ignaty, the three younger boys, were chasing

the chickens and roosters that the former owners left behind. Seven-year-old Domna was holding her little one-year-old sister in her arms. Zinaida had brought the kids back.

After the first pick-up load was unloaded, Ivan, Efrem and the older boys went for the second load while the women and children stayed behind to put things away and to play on their new farm. Masha dropped by to visit the new neighbors.

"You don't live too far from us," said Masha, who had brought her three children along with her. "It took me only five minutes from our house."

"There's more Old Believers around here than where we lived in Mt. Angel," said Vera, who was still trying to quiet down the unruly infant. "Domna, go tell Feodora to put Ksenia to sleep." Domna listened to her mother.

"It's a nice district from what I hear," said Masha after Domna went up the back stairs and into the house. "The only thing is that they don't teach Russian in the school in your district like they do in our school district in Marion County."

"I guess it's because we're in a different county," said Vera.

"My Ustina comes home and tells me that the bilingual teachers in her school teach Russian because they believe the Russian children shouldn't forget their native language," said Masha.

"My sister Zinaida told me that the teachers in those schools are Americans, and they don't speak clear Russian," said Vera.

"That's true," said Masha. "But they're trying to help our Russian people, and that's what counts. It's so funny, but one of the men teachers started growing a beard and coming out to our church. I think he wants to become an Old Believer. Our nastoyatel (minister) said he would baptize him into our faith if he wanted to join us."

The women kept talking about school and about the teachers who were trying to educate their children into the mainstream of American society. Meanwhile, the children had given up chasing after the chickens and roosters and



were playing a favorite game of theirs called 'Гуси/Goosie' (Geese). Ustina wanted to play the role of the farmer's wife. Pasha was chosen to act as a mean, vicious wolf. Luba, Ignaty, Evlampy, and Domna played the part of the geese.

"Гуси, гуси/Goosie, goosie" (Geese, Geese), yelled Ustina. The geese stood at the far south end of the driveway.

"Га, га, га/Ga, ga, ga" (Ga, Ga, Ga), honked the geese in unison.

"Есть хотите/Yest' hotitye?" (Do you want to eat?) asked Ustina, the farmer's wife, who stood close to the country road at the north end of the driveway beside the house.

"Да, да, да/Da, da, da" (Yes, yes, yes), answered the geese hungrily.

"Хлеба с маслом/Hleba s maslom?" (Bread with butter?) asked the farmer's wife. Ustina gestured dramatically with both arms held out to the sides in dismay.

"Нет, нет, нет/Nyet, nyet, nyet" (No, no, no), screamed the geese angrily.

"А чего/A chevo?" (Well, what then?) asked the farmer's wife. Ustina gestured dramatically with both arms held out to the sides in dismay.

"Конфет! Конфет!/Konfet! Konfet!" (Candy! Candy!) responded the hungry geese.

"Ну, летите как хотите/Nu, letitye kak hotitye" (Well, come fly here if you want it), said the farmer's wife. She waved for them to fly to her.

"Серый волк под горой не пускает нас домой/Seriy volk pod goroy nye puskayet nas domoy" (The gray wolf near the hill won't let us come home), cried the geese in anguish. Pasha, the wolf, peeked out from behind an apple tree.

"А что он там делает/A shto on tam dyelayet?" (And what is he doing there?) asked the farmer's wife.

"Зубы точит, нас есть хочет/Zubi tochit, nas yest hochet" (He's sharpening his teeth; he wants to eat us), answered the geese in a shaky voice. Pasha, the wolf, grinned from behind the apple tree and showed his sharp teeth.

"Ну, летите как хотите/Nu, letitye kak hotitye" (Well, come fly here any way you can), said the farmer's wife.

The children started running down the driveway to the farmer's wife, flapping their arms like goose wings. Suddenly, Pasha, the wolf, leaped from behind the apple tree and started chasing the geese. The geese ran as fast as they could. He caught three-year-old Ignaty, who was the slowest in the group. Pasha pretended to gobble Ignaty up by biting softly on his captured right arm. Then the game was repeated until all the geese were captured.

Zahar, who had been kicking a small round disc with twine splayed out in all directions from the center for about two inches, stopped to watch Pasha try to catch Domna, who was the fastest runner. After Domna was captured, Ustina asked Zahar if he wanted to be the wolf.

"No, that's for babies," answered eight-year-old Zahar. "This is for big kids."

He showed his djonza and threw it up in the air and then kicked it with the side of his left foot, then with the inside of his right foot, then over the top of his head with his left foot, and finally high into the air with a jumping kick with his right foot.

"Show-off," said Ustina as she walked away with Domna to play a girls' game.

By the end of the day the Eroseff family was moved in. Now the hard work of managing a farm began. By harvest time the able-bodied workers were all out in the berry fields walking up and down the rows picking Marion berries and loganberries. The picking continued on into September, when school began.

"It's time to get the children into school," said Don Christianson, the school director, two weeks after school had begun and the children had not registered yet. He brought a Russian interpreter with him. John Beliy, the Russian interpreter, was a new bilingual teacher at the school.

"We're sorry we haven't sent the children to school, yet, but we can't afford to hire Mexican laborers like other farmers," apologized the heavily-bearded Efrem as he

continued to pick the ripe purple berries with his stained hands. Efrem worked in old baggy pants and in an American shirt with long sleeves. A baseball cap covered his short black hair.

"The Oregon state law demands that all school-aged children must be in school or else they're considered truant," explained the stern law-abiding school director. "You Old Believers must learn to live by the same laws that we Americans have to."

"I have ten children, and I don't have a steady job," explained Efrem in his defense. "We are in debt for the old pick-up truck that I made a small down payment on so I could have something to transport the berries to Smuckers. My wife can't help out here because she has three little ones in the house to take care of. One of them is only four months old."

"Mr. Eroeff," said Mr. Christianson after the interpreter translated the long speech back to the school director, "there are many other people who have similar problems, but that still does not excuse them from sending their children to school when school starts. That's the law."

"I'll send the younger children tomorrow," said Mr. Eroeff. "They're not much help anyway. But I'll need the older three for at least another week until the harvest is over. I can't do it by myself. You must understand that."

"Why don't you send all the children in tomorrow and get them registered," said Mr. Christianson in an attempt at a decent compromise, "and then you can keep the children home maybe two or three days out of the week. We need them registered because funds for the children aren't generated until they're registered."

The father acquiesced and the next day he brought all six school children into the office to register them into the school district. John Beliy, the new bilingual teacher, filled out the forms for the children and took them to their classes. The youngest student, Domna, was taken into John Beliy's readiness class, where other Old Believer children were taught to speak, read and write the American language.

During class time Domna Eroseeff struggled with the rest of the Russian-speaking children to pronounce American words, something they weren't used to because the Old Believer parents did not permit their children to speak 'по-американски/по-amerikanski' (American) at home. When the children were asked to clap in rhythm to "The Farmer in the Dell," Domna spoke up without hesitation.

"We're not supposed to clap our hands," said round-faced Domna boldly. "Это грех/Eto grekh" (It's a sin).

"Why?" asked Mr. Beliy, who was unfamiliar with Old Believer ways.

"When you clap your hands, you're slapping God in the face," explained Domna in a child-like way, full of faith and simplicity.

"You're not supposed to snap your fingers, either," added David, a skinny boy with a crooked jaw.

"Why?" asked Mr. Beliy again. He gave up teaching the regular lesson in exchange for learning some Old Believer culture from the children.

"Because when you snap your fingers you're pinching God," explained David.

"No, that's not true," interjected Iriney, who had a dimple in his right cheek when he smiled. "When you snap your fingers you're helping the бесики/besiki (little demons) chop down trees and пакостить/pakostit' (do mischief)."

"Also, when you rock your legs up and down while sitting, it means you're rocking a бесик/besik (little demon)," said Vassa, a little girl with a Chinese appearance to her round brown face.

"My mother said that if you whistle in a house where there's ikons, then you're calling the бесики/besiki (little demons)," said Lydia in a slow, carefully thought out manner. She was the neatest dressed girl in the class.

The discussion of besiki ended when it was time for recess. The Old Believer children played mostly with their own kind, except when it came to the merry-go-round. That's when they played with the Americans--but in a competitive way.

"Iriney, come help us push the Russian way!" called David. He was trying to push clockwise against several American boys.

"Jason, come help us push the American way!" called a boy from the opposing side. He was pushing counter clockwise.

The see-saw battle lasted for the duration of the recess. First the American side would be winning, and the merry-go-round would spin against the direction of the sun. Then the Russian side would be winning, and the merry-go-round would rotate in the same direction as the sun. The game ended when the teacher on recess duty blew the whistle for the children to go back to class.

Back in class the Russian children continued to teach Mr. Beliy all about their Old Belief.

"Do you know that if you poke a fork into a roll of dough you're poking the sharp object into God's body?" asked Iriney.

"Do you know that Hristos is really fire, but when he comes on Judgment Day, he'll be able to take any form he wants?" asked Vassa.

"Do you know that when it rains it's the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) crying?" asked David.

"Why is she crying?" asked John Beliy.

"Because God wants all Americans to be Russians, and the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God) cries for them," said David.

Several weeks passed and the older daughter, Feodora, had not come to school, yet. When the secretary looked at the record of absences and reported the truancy to the school director, the director asked John Beliy to call the parents and find out why she still wasn't in school. The mother answered the phone and reported that her thirteen-year-old daughter was sick.

Two more weeks passed. Feodora still had not come to school. And then a visit to the home by Don Christianson and John Beliy revealed the truth: Feodora was not coming to school any more. Her mother needed her at home to help

with the children while the mother worked in the fields to help the father with the cauliflower harvest.

"Why can't you let the older boy take care of the children?" asked Mr. Christianson through his interpreter, Mr. Beliy.

"We don't feel it's proper to have boys take care of little girls," answered Vera, who had her flowery scarf tied behind her head in a knot. Her hair was tucked underneath the scarf.

"It's your responsibility to send Feodora to school," stated Mr. Christianson. "And if you need to find a baby-sitter, then that's your responsibility, too. But you can't deprive a child of its lawful right to an education just because you need her as a baby-sitter."

"I thought there was freedom in this country," said Vera in a mournful voice. Her words were left untranslated because Feodora interrupted.

"How come girls my age in other schools aren't forced to go to school?" asked Feodora in a bitter voice. She stood beside her mother. Her scarf was tied under her chin.

"Feodora, what other school districts do is their business," explained Mr. Christianson. He didn't need an interpreter to speak to her. "Besides, they're not following the law, which says that schools can't legally excuse any child who has not completed the eighth grade or reached the age of fourteen years old. And if you persist in breaking the law, then I'll have to send the truant officer after you."

Two weeks later, after the truant officer brought a letter of warning of court action to the parents, the father, Efrem Eroff, came to the office to speak with Mr. Christianson. Mr. Beliy was in the middle of teaching his students a Russian song for a first grade "International Day" program, when he was called over the intercom system to report to the office. He left the classroom in the hands of his capable aide. She led the children in singing:

"Пусть всегда будет солнце  
Пусть всегда будет небо

Пусть всегда будет мама  
Пусть всегда буду я. "  
"Poost' vsegda boodyet solntse  
Poost' vsegda boodyet nyebo  
Poost' vsegda boodyet mama  
Poost' vsegda boodu ya."  
(Let there always be a sun  
Let there always be a sky  
Let there always be a mother  
Let there always be me.)

When John Beliy reached the office, Mr. Eroseeff was sitting in a chair in Mr. Christianson's office and waiting for the interpreter to arrive so that the communication process could begin.

"Mr. Beliy," began Mr. Christianson when all three men were seated, "you need to explain to Mr. Eroseeff that he and his wife are in danger of a court fine and a possible jail sentence if they don't send their daughter to school. It's their legal responsibility to see to it that their children are in school."

"Is there any way we can appeal to the school to free Feodora from compulsory school attendance?" asked Mr. Eroseeff in a plaintive voice. He felt that he had an ax to grind, and he wasn't going to stop until his goal was gained. "We're only asking that she be allowed to help us raise the children. The mother is suffering from a heart condition because of the heavy load that she has to bear. She has to clothe, feed, and get the children ready for school, and she has to look after the little ones. We're a poor family, but we work hard. We don't ask for welfare like a lot of Americans do. We believe we must work for what we get, and besides, it's against our religion to accept welfare."

"Mr. Eroseeff," said Mr. Christianson after he listened carefully to Mr. Beliy's translation of the long, mournful speech, "the best I can do for you is to tell you that you can try writing a letter to the school board to see what they'll say about the matter."

The next day Mr. Eroseeff brought a petition in handwritten form to the school. The letter was translated and presented to the board at their next regular meeting. The request that the school board "free our older girl Feodora from compulsory school attendance" and "help us in our misfortune" was turned down because the school board reasoned they could not legally excuse a child from school attendance. Only a judge could do that.

When the case was finally taken to court, Efrem and Vera asked their friend Andrey Ribrov to speak for them before the district judge. His command of the American language was much better than most of his fellow Old Believers, and he had even succeeded in becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States after attending night classes for a year.

"Your honor," said Andrey Ribrov at the preliminary hearing. He stood up and faced the judge, who was seated behind his high podium. Vera sat with her sleeping baby in her arms. Efrem sat beside her. "The accused parents have explained to me, and asked me to relay their words to you, that their children are beginning to value American morals and traditions more than our Russian ways, and the parents do not like that. They teach their children all they need to know as far as math, religion and Russian is concerned. And they feel their children do not need more than those essentials in their Russian society."

After listening to Andrey Ribrov's speech in defense of the accused parents, the gray-haired judge put his hands together and leaned forward in his chair.

"I cannot allow the parents to keep the children at home and away from school," began the district judge in a stern, but just tone. "If I allowed one child to be excused from the compulsory school attendance law, then I'd have to excuse every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes into this country and feels that American education is not essential to their life. I would advise you this: Try to get along with the law in the country to which you came voluntarily and with high hopes. You may not think American education is the best thing, but



your child is going to grow up and live and work in America. They are going to have to learn to live with Americans."

Then the judge imposed the sentence--a day in jail for the parents for each day the daughter does not attend school.

"If this is what they do in this country," said Vera when she got home, "then I'd rather go to jail than send the children to school. If that's what they want to do, then let them come and get me and the kids. They'll have to take the baby, too." She clutched the baby to her breast and cried.

"Vera, don't cry," said Efrem. "We'll move to another school district, or back to our old place."

"But we just bought this farm," cried Vera. "Where are we going to live? The old place was too small. How will we live without the money we've been getting from this farm?"

"God will help us," said Efrem in a voice that saw little hope in anything else.

The newspapers began printing numerous articles about the case, and the elders of the Old Ritualist Church of St. Nikola, the Uspenska Church and several other churches of St. Nikola came forward to announce their disapproval of the Eroseeff family and their refusal to send their children to public schools. They unanimously supported public education, except for two subjects which they considered to be contrary to scripture. Those two subjects were sex education and evolution, and they requested that Old Believer children be excused from attending those classes. A few staunch believers wanted to see their children excused even from music classes during their fast days.

After discovering that even their own people had turned against them, Efrem and Vera called Ivan and asked him to help them move back to the trailer home, which they had rented out to Efrem's widowed mother. During the summer, on the holyday commemorating the Saints Peter and Paul, they sold the farm and bought another one in another school district. By then Feodora was fourteen years old and was no longer legally bound to the compulsory school attendance law.

## Chapter 20 -- "Transfiguration of Hristos (Christ)"

"Did you notice how much Nikolai changed ever since he started dating Haritina seriously?" asked Natasha Svyatogorov as she walked with her sister on Young Street in Woodburn. They were on their regular Sunday walk through town in their colorful Sunday clothes. The white aprons hung gracefully around their waist.

The Svyatogorov family had moved back to Woodburn from Alaska the previous year during the cold winter months, when Evgenia Svyatogorov could no longer bear the constant cold in the Kenai Peninsula.

"He won't even talk to us," replied Ustina. She frowned to show her disapproval.

"Mother was hoping that one of us would get to marry Nikolai," said Natasha. She glanced at a passing car to see if someone familiar would come along and give them a ride to the park.

"You'll have to start looking for another Russian boy," said Ustina. "Afanasy Golubin is still available, you know."

"He's too old for me," said Natasha. "He's eight years older than I am."

Just then a flashy electric blue Mustang car pulled up. Prokopy Ribrov honked the horn and his brother Nestor opened the window.

"Do you want a ride?" asked Prokopy with a gleaming smile. He was wearing a silky light purple shirt with clusters of purple grapes on the front panel. The girls looked at each other and tried to refrain from giggling about the fact that they had just been talking about finding another boy. And here were two boys.

"Where are you walking to?" asked Nestor in a shy way. He was eating an apple.

"Oh, we were just walking around town," said Natasha.

"We were headed for the park," said Ustina in a candid voice. Her dress was made out of a pattern which had red roses in prolific abundance all around the dress.

"Well, hop in," said Prokopy impatiently. "We'll give you a ride." At that moment a song blared out loud on the car radio.

"Is that Elvis singing?" asked Natasha excitedly.

"Yeh, he's singing 'Way Down,'" said Prokopy.

"Let's go, Ustina. I want to hear the song," said Natasha, stepping toward the car. Nestor opened the car door and the girls climbed into the back seat. Natasha started immediately to twist her body and snap her fingers in rhythm to the music.

"Did you hear that he died five days ago?" asked Prokopy as he listened to the virile voice singing "way down where the fires blaze."

"I cried when he died," confessed Natasha.

"My mother says that he probably didn't die," said Ustina. "She says he probably staged the whole thing so that he could go into hiding somewhere."

"Where would he go?" asked Nestor.

"My mother thinks he went to a monastery," said Ustina.

"Man, that sure is a far-fetched story if I ever heard one," said Prokopy in disbelief. "I saw him on TV, and his head and body were so bloated that he looked like he was going to die from overeating."

Another song came on the radio, and the subject of their conversation changed to other rock 'n' roll stars and their music.

Meanwhile, in another part of town, preparations were being made for a wedding for Nikolai Bogolubov and Haritina Ribrov. The customary meeting between parents had already occurred, and the дивишник/divishnik (pre-wedding festivities and preparations) was in full swing.

"Nikolai, tell us about your first date with Haritina," said Irina Velikov in jest at one of the late night festivities.

"Tell us about the first kiss!" yelled out Fotina Golubin from the end of the table where the girls were seated. She was doing иглочки/igolochky (punch-needle) embroidery for Haritina's new curtains around the ikons.

"It happened so suddenly," said Nikolai. His cheeks blushed, and his wavy hair fell into his eyes. He brushed his hair away. "It happened right after Easter week."

"We knew each other ever since his father came to America and my father gave Nikolai's family a place to stay," said Haritina.

"How about the first kiss?" yelled Fotina again.

"That's a secret," said Haritina. Her cheeks turned rosy-red.

The girls had finished making the крощота/krossota (wedding-cap) for Haritina, and they placed it on her head to see if it fit right. The thirty pink with white-edged soft linen flowers looked simply gorgeous on Haritina's brown-haired head.

"That deserves a kiss from the жених/zhenikh (bridegroom)," said Fotina persistently.

Nikolai put his left arm around Haritina's left shoulder and gave her a kiss. Cheers and hoots filled the room as the guests raised their glasses of бра/braga (home-made berry-wine) to their lips and drank a toast to the happy couple.

After the wedding, Nikolai and Haritina lived together with Nikolai's parents for a month. Then they found a cozy two bedroom house in Woodburn which they could afford to buy. Nikolai was not the farmer type. He enjoyed working in the furniture factory, but he had plans of possibly becoming a truck driver for better pay when he had finished some required classes. The times were changing, and the young Old Believers were forced to change with the times in order to survive.

Even views about entertainment were changing, for more and more Old Believers were seen going to the movie theaters, and young teen-agers were even seen entering restaurants and eating American food on American plates. Seasonal festivities, like the Oktoberfest in Mt. Angel, were attended by young and old alike. It was during the yearly fall harvest festival in Mt. Angel that Ivan Bogolubov and Andrey Ribrov discovered that Russia's old immoral infestation called the Скоморохи/Skomorokhi (street

entertainers) were alive and well in America. It was displayed in the form of a circus, and a clown-faced man in tights performed many feats of magic. He even performed the dangerous trick of blowing fire out of his mouth.

"They had these kind of колдуны/kolduny (magicians) in Turkey," said Ivan. "Pavel Golubin told me they performed these kind of tricks by using Satanic power."

"He sure knows how to make the audience laugh," commented Andrey. "Look, he's bringing out a bear. That's the kind we saw in China."

"They used bears in Turkey, too," said Ivan, who continued watching and criticizing at the same moment.

The two men later drove with their families up to the famous Abbey on top of a hill overlooking the entire Willamette Valley. Nikolai and Haritina, the newlyweds, tagged along behind the two families. They didn't want to be seen holding hands and sneaking occasional kisses. At one point they even managed to sneak away and buy corn on the cob for themselves from one of the many booths in the center of town.

By the time the seasons changed, and winter blew its cold winds and freezing rain into the peaceful valley again, another change had come into the life of the Old Believers. Several families were allowing their children to participate in an American Christmas program at the local school. Anastasia came with her husband Vladimir to see her son Stefan play the part of the father. Masha came without Ivan to see Luba play the part of the mother. Nikolai came with Haritina; they sat in the back with Masha and her other two children, Pasha and Ustina.

The school play was titled "One World." It was a story of a prejudiced school boy who doesn't like foreigners. The teacher in the school explains to the boy how Russian, German, and Spanish families celebrate the common holyday called Christmas. He begins to understand after watching different families celebrate their Christmas that

they all have one thing in common: the birth of the Christ-child.

The scene with the Russian family began with a teacher making an announcement to a class of students.

Teacher: "Tonight our friends are going to show us how they celebrate Christmas in their homeland. First Petya will show us."

(Curtain opens. Living Room scene. Children cleaning the walls and helping mother hang new curtains. The spotlight is on Petya, who is painting the wall.)

Petya: "Mother, why must we clean, clean, clean? I want to go and skate."

Mother: "Petya, don't you know what day this is? Don't you know what this evening is? Don't you know what tomorrow is?"

Tanya: "It's our prazdnik, a holyday in celebration of the birth of God."

Petya: "I still want to skate. The ice is so smooth. Why do I need to paint?"

Mother: "All must be clean for the prazdnik. Every wall must be painted. Every corner must be cleaned. Every floor must be polished. Every table must be dusted. Every window shiny and clean. Every curtain must be new before the ikons can be placed."

Petya: "Mother, why must we put special ikons up at this time of the year?"

Mother: "Questions, questions. Too many questions. Ask your sister. I must finish my work. We must all be finished by the time your father comes home from his work in the woods."

Petya: "Maria, why must we put up new curtains?"

Maria: "You know very well they are for the ikons. The ikons are symbols for the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), Hristos, and the Saints."

Petya: "Oh yes, now I remember. I was so little last year. I was only five."

Tanya: "You are not much bigger now."

Petya: "I am, too. I'm a whole six, and I go to school."

Mother: "Stop teasing and finish that sewing. Is that your last piece?"

Maria: "We are almost finished. My fingers and back ache from sewing all the new clothes."

Tanya: "See father's new shirt. Isn't it lovely?" (She raises an embroidered rubaha with fuchsia.)

Maria: "And his new belt." (She raises a woven Russian belt.)

Petya: "Where's my new shirt and belt? Don't I get one, too?"

Mother: "Petya, you must wait, you know. Now, run along with Maria and bring the ikons."

Tanya: "Mother, someone at school asked me why we don't celebrate Christmas on December 25 like they do. They wanted to know why we have it 13 days later on January 7."

Mother: "What did you tell them?"

Tanya: "I said I couldn't remember, but I would ask."

Mother: "Here comes your father. Why don't you ask him." (The spotlight switches from the mother to the father.)

Father: (Greeting in Russian) "Здоров живёте/Zdorov zhiviyotye" (May you live in good health).

Tanya and Mother: (Return greeting) "Милости просим/Milosti prosim" (We ask for mercy).

Tanya: "Could you tell me why our Christmas is on January 7 instead of December 25?"

Father: "Of course I will. Our fathers have taught us to follow the Julian calendar for our holy days. Since the Julian calendar is older than the Gregorian calendar, it's also the most accurate. When the rest of the western world decided to change to the new Gregorian calendar, we Russians decided the Julian calendar was holy, and so we preserve it to this day."

Tanya: "Yes, now I remember."

Father: "The house looks clean and ready. Where are the special ikons for the coming holyday?"

Mother: "Petya and Maria went to get them. Then all will be ready."

Father: "We need to go to bed very early tonight, for we must be on time for our midnight meeting at the molelnya, our church." (Children enter)

Petya and Maria: (Hello in Russian) "Здоров живёте/Zdorov zhiviyotye."

Father: (Return greeting) "Милости просим/Milosti prosim."

Mother: "Please put those ikons on the shelf on that eastern wall."

Petya: "Why not here. There's room." (He points to a night stand beside the north wall.)

Father: "Do as mother says and place them on the eastern wall. Our fathers taught us to place them there because the sun rises in the east, which is a symbol of the divine light that the Christ-child brought into the world." (Petya places the Nativity ikon on the shelf, and the Maria places the ikon of the Madonna with the Christ-child in her arms beside it.)

Mother: "We must all get ready for bed. Midnight will come very soon. The house is ready, and now we must get ready."

Petya: "Maria, what do you like best about Christmas?"

Maria: "I love the candles we get to hold in church. Their flames are soft and lovely. Don't you think they're simply beautiful when they light up the whole church?"

Petya: "Yes, but I do get tired of standing so long. Seven hours is a long time to stand in church."

Maria: "I keep my mind on the beautiful candle light. I try to remember that their light stands for the light brought into the world during the darkest hour of the night and the darkest age of the world. What do you like about Christmas, Petya?"

Petya: "I like when I can break my fast and eat meat again. When morning comes, and the feast begins, I'm very happy."

Tanya: "I like those things, too. After our six weeks of fast, the food we weren't able to eat tastes good again. Especially when all our good friends are there. I like to see all the new clothes."



Father: "Off to bed now, and say your prayers. St. Nikola knows what little girls and boys need most."

Mother: "Let's sing 'В лесу родилась ёлочка/V lesoo rodilas yolochka' (A Pine Tree Grew in the Forest) before we go to sleep." (The children sing the song in Russian together. After the song the curtain falls on the scene and the next family is introduced.)

After the play, Masha mentioned to Luba that they shouldn't have had holy ikons in the play.

"They were only paintings on cardboard," said Luba defensively.

"They still shouldn't stage such nonsense," said Masha. "Our ikons are sacred, and they are not to be shown to Americans, especially in public like that." Luba remained silent.

The yearly cycle kept turning like a wheel, and by spring time Nikolai and Haritina formally announced to Masha that she was going to be a grandmother sometime toward the end of August. Masha was overjoyed at the grand thought.

A week before Haritina was due to give birth, though, there was talk of a great собор/sobor (assembly) of the three major Old Believer groups. Among the young people the three groups were known by three nicknames: the Turkish group was nicknamed "turkeys" because they came from Turkey; the Sinkiang group was nicknamed "fish" because they came from a river area in China; and the Harbin group was nicknamed "monkeys" because they lived in the jungles of Brazil. The great meeting was called to settle differences. The meeting to take place after the holyday celebrating the Transfiguration of Christ on August 19 (new style).

The holyday was celebrated in solemn fashion. The liturgy proclaimed the miracle of divine light that Christ showed to three of his disciples on Mount Tabor:

Преобразился еси на горе Христе Боже,  
показавый ученикам твоим славу твою, якоже можашу:  
да возсияет и нам грешным свет твой присносущный,  
молитвами Богородицы, светодавче, слава тебе.

(When thou wert transfigured on the mountain, O Christ  
our God,  
thou didst show thy glory to thy disciples as they were able  
to receive it.  
Illuminate also for us sinners thine everlasting light,  
by the intercessions of the Mother of God, giver of light,  
glory to thee.)

After the holyday, people from all parts of the valley began gathering for the great coḡop/sobor (council). The elders from the seven churches, which had formed ever since the Old Believers had started arriving in Oregon in the early 1960's, were there. The purpose of the council meeting was to make the liberal Turkish Old Believers more consistent and compatible with the other, more conservative, Old Believers.

The outcome of the council was encouraging to all parties concerned. The elders agreed to the following points: (1) not to allow the children to eat American hot lunches in school nor to drink American milk; (2) not to buy meat in American stores; (3) not to buy sugar in American stores. The concern with church dietary laws was considered to be a crucial matter, and the soul of each Old Believer was at stake if any of the laws were disobeyed.

## Chapter 21 -- "Assumption of Mother of God"

On the day before the holyday of the Repose of the Virgin Mary, which was celebrated for the first time as a feast on August 15, 460 A.D. (old style), Masha was getting ready to go to the evening service to begin prayers to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), when suddenly the telephone rang.

"Mother," said a shaky voice on the other end of the line. "We won't be riding to church with you tonight. Haritina wants me to take her to the Salem hospital as quick as I can."

"Is she having contractions already?" asked Masha after she recognized Nikolai's voice. Masha shifted her flowery scarf with fringes on her head.

"Yes," answered Nikolai quickly. His attention had turned back to Haritina.

"Let me talk to her," said Masha.

"She can't," answered Nikolai. "She's on the bed having another contraction."

"Why don't you let me call Sofia Golubin to come over to your house," said Masha. "She's an experienced midwife. And I can help her." She didn't want Nikolai to take Haritina to a male doctor.

"Mother, we already talked about that before," said Nikolai in a louder voice. He tried to make himself heard over the hysterical moaning that the expectant mother Haritina was making. "I told you before that we decided to take her to Salem hospital. There's a new American method called the Lamaze technique, and we've been practicing it for months now. I mentioned it to you before."

"At least let me call the nastoyatel (elder) and tell him to be on hand in case of emergency and the baby needs to be baptized in the hospital," said Masha. She knew she couldn't fight the proud, self-willed Haritina, who wanted to be the boss in her own family.

"Everything's going to be all right, mother," said Nikolai. "I have to go. Haritina has stopped for a few minutes, and she wants to go now."

"I'm going to call the nastoyatel," said the persistent mother.

"All right," said the son, who didn't want to upset his mother. It was a tough diplomatic job to try to please two women, one a mother and the other a wife.

Nikolai hung up the new digital telephone, and he hurried to Haritina's side.

"How do you feel?" asked Nikolai as he helped Haritina hurriedly into a light coat.

"I feel sharp pains shooting up my spine like arrows in a wavering flight through the sky," said Haritina as she tried to catch her breath. "The arrow seems to hit my head and then it bounces back and lodges in my womb."

"This is no time to be poetic," said Nikolai. "I'll grab your suitcase, and you grab hold of my arm. We've got to hurry."

Nikolai made it to the hospital and found out that Haritina was only in the early phases of labor. Her water bag didn't even break yet. Nikolai stayed with Haritina throughout the long laborious ordeal and watched over her like a shepherd over his flock.

Meanwhile, Masha had a hard time thinking about the liturgy that was being chanted. She wanted to rush to her son's side and be the first to find out whether it was a boy or a girl. Masha did manage to sing the prayers to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God). At the point where a psalm was sung in her honor, she perked up her ears and listened more attentively:

“Красень добротою паче сынов человеческих,  
излияся благодать во устах твоих,  
сего ради благослови тя Бог во веки.”  
(Thou are fairer than the children of men:  
grace is poured into thy lips,  
therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.)

After the evening service Masha went home and waited for a call from her son. She did not know that Nikolai did not want to leave his wife's side to make any phone calls. When

Masha tried to go to sleep she only tossed and turned until it was time to go to church again. It was two o'clock in the morning, and the stars were shining brightly in the sky, when Masha, Ivan and the children drove back to church for the main celebration of the Assumption of the Mother of God.

Masha could barely keep her eyes open. She was so tired from not having slept after the evening service and from worrying about Haritina and the baby, which was to be her first grandchild, that she hardly was aware of her surroundings. Masha stayed in the car with Luba and tried to rest a while so she could go into the church refreshed and awake. About an hour passed, and Masha slept soundly in the front seat of the car.

Suddenly, she sprang up and said, "What was that?" She thought she had heard a baby cry. Luba was fast asleep in the back seat of the car, and she didn't hear her mother's startling awakening cry. Masha smiled to herself and realized that she had been dreaming that Haritina had her baby. She could still hear the newborn baby crying as she reflected upon her dream.

"Luba, get up," said Masha, shaking her daughter. "Let's go to church."

Luba opened her eyes only after her mother blew a cool refreshing breath of air into her face. They both crossed themselves before entering the church, and then, after entering the church, they made their customary three crossings and bows to the waist. The church had not filled up yet, and there was still room to crowd into the right hand side of the hall behind the men.

Masha was alert now. The dream had snapped her back into a reality where everything was clear and vivid. The words of the liturgy rang like bells in her ears:

“В рождестве девство сохранила еси,  
во успение мира не оставила еси Богородице:  
преставился еси к животу,  
матери сущи живота,  
и молитвами твоими избавляеши от смерти души  
наша.”

(In giving birth, thou, O Mother of God didst retain thy virginity,  
and in thy Repose thou didst not forsake the world.  
Thou hast passed into Life,  
thou that art the Mother of Life,  
and dost by thine intercessions redeem our souls from death.)

The words that Masha listened to took on a deeper meaning than ever before, and she sensed the Mother of God in a greater light than she had ever before. She couldn't explain it, but deep in her soul she felt a fire radiating throughout her body and filling her heart and bosom with a warmth and a love for all mankind.

When Masha came home and received a telephone call from Nikolai early in the morning after the sun had lifted its head above the mountain range in the east, she was overjoyed to hear that it was a girl.

"Have you checked in the church calendar to see what name you'll give her," asked Masha after he gave her the details of the birth and the vital statistics.

"There's three names that fall within the allotted time period for choosing a name," said Nikolai, who had done his homework.

"What three names?" asked Masha anxiously.

"The first one was Uliana, and Haritina didn't like that one," said Nikolai.

"That was the name of my godmother, Uliana Lazarevskaya," said Masha excitedly. "Do you remember her in Brazil? She was the midwife at your birth."

"No, I don't remember her," said Nikolai, who had left her behind in Brazil with all his memories of the past when he came to America. "Anyway, the second name was Susanna."

"That's a Hebrew name," said Masha in a derogatory voice.

"I know," said Nikolai. "I didn't pick it even though I liked the fact that it signified the white lily."

"What was the third name?" asked Masha impatiently.

"The third name was taken from the 9th day of August, which makes it the 22nd if you add thirteen days to make it coincide with the American calendar," explained Nikolai.

"What was the name?" inquired Masha in a raised voice.

"Maria," said Nikolai.

The following year was totally dedicated to the raising of Maria, who was loved just as much by the grandparents, Masha and Ivan, as she was by the parents, Nikolai and Haritina. The children, who visited frequently, tiptoed around the house when she slept and huddled around her crib when she was awake. From Nikolai's side there were Pasha, Ustina and Luba, and from Haritina's side there were Prokopy and Nestor. Then, of course, there were the proud grandparents from Haritina's side, Andrey and Paraskeva.

Grandmother Masha seemed to come over every day with either a small present or with some word of advice. During one of her visits she presented her granddaughter with a tiny Russian dress that she had made with three embroidered strawberries on each shoulder. Ustina Svyatogorov was chosen as the godmother for Maria because the Svyatogorov family had always been close to the Bogolubov family ever since their friendship blossomed in Hong Kong; and Ivan felt a special kinship with the family because of his friend Antip, who had lost his life in the woods. Ivan still carried that tragic day on his conscience.

By her first birthday Maria was already walking and making all kinds of baby sounds. Grandfather Ivan would take her out in a stroller whenever Nikolai and Haritina wanted to leave her over for an afternoon. Nikolai and Haritina would go shopping on those free days. Grandfather Andrey had a special swing he had made for Maria whenever she came to stay in the Ribrov home; the swing resembled a hammock and it could be hooked up to the upper wooden post of a doorway. Maria enjoyed the soft, cloth swing, and she loved to fall asleep in it whenever Grandmother Paraskeva gently rocked her and sang a Russian lullaby to her.

One day Luba surprised Haritina by asking her a question she didn't expect from a ten-year-old girl.

"What sign is she?" asked Luba as she playfully tickled Maria's little feet.

"She's a Virgo," said Haritina as she changed the baby into a dry Pamper diaper.

"I'm a Libra," said Luba proudly.

"Where did you learn about that?" asked Haritina.

"They were talking about it on the radio," said Luba. Haritina remembered that she also had curiously turned the radio up whenever astrological reports were broadcast over her favorite rock 'n' roll station.

The presence of Maria made the families forget that the economy was falling into bad times. Masha and Ivan suffered two bad years with the berry harvest. One year a blight hit their berry vines and the entire crop was lost. Other farmers suffered a similar fate. Then the year after that, Ivan and his Russian friends, who had made it rich on the berries in previous years at 75 cents a pound, found out that there was a surplus of berries, and Smuckers Company was paying a minimum price of 15 to 20 cents per pound to the hard-working farmers. "They're giving us peanuts!" screamed all the farmers. But there was little that they could do but try and stick it out for a better season. Some farmers decided to call in a lawyer to fight for their cause; but they only lost \$100 a head to a lawyer who tried all the shuffle-board diplomacy that he could and still couldn't beat the economic law of supply and demand. Other farmers, like Ivan, decided to cut down the berries and turn the land into a grazing pasture for cows. There were numerous possibilities for the farmers. The faithful few continued to put up the new shoots in the spring and pick the berries in the late summer for the minimum price, which was barely enough to put bread on the table, let alone pay for the land and home.

Ivan was forced to take on heavier contracts for longer periods of time in the tree-trimming business with Weyerhaeuser Company. It was in the month of March in the year 1980 that Ivan began to totally depend on the money



that he was making from the trees to support his family. Nikolai had his own family to support now and was of no help to Ivan. Pasha had decided to go to high school with a Russian friend of his. And Masha with the two growing girls, Ustina and Luba, barely scratched out enough money by working on other people's farms for material that they needed to sew new clothes for themselves.

When Masha had heard from neighbors that Mt. St. Helens had erupted in late March, she became exceedingly worried for Ivan. He was working in the area around Mt. St. Helens with three other men to fill a contract they had made with Weyerhaeuser Company. When he came home unharmed a week later, Masha was relieved.

"Don't go back there," pleaded Masha when he came home.

"I've signed another contract to go back the last week in April with Sylvester Bistrohodov and two Mexican men," said Ivan. "We need the money, you know. Look at Andrey. He's talking of selling his house and moving back to Brazil or Bolivia. He says he's going to take a trip there to see if he can manage it there. Look at Vasily. The bank might take his house away because they're not making any money from their berries and they can't even sell it in order to buy something smaller. Do you want us to end up in the poorhouse?"

"No," cried Masha. "But I'm afraid for you. I'd rather see us in the poorhouse or on welfare than to worry about you working near a volcano that's about to blow its top off."

"Those are just rumors," said Ivan. "We saw those small eruptions, and they don't amount to anything more than a small sprinkling of dirty ash."

"But what if the mountain blows and lava starts coming in your direction?" cried Masha. Her face was bathed in tears at the thought of losing her husband.

"I'm with that old man of the mountain they keep talking about," said Ivan. "I don't think she's going anywhere."

Ivan stayed to celebrate Easter Week with the family. He visited all his old friends and played with his children and

with his granddaughter Maria. He spent the nights comforting Masha and reassuring her that nothing would happen to him. A week after the seven day Easter Feast, Ivan packed his sleeping bag, pop-tent, chain saw, and other necessities and headed for work in an area northwest of the threatening volcano. Several times Masha sent Nikolai up to the work site along the North Fork of the Toutle River and tried to persuade Ivan to drop the job and come home. But Ivan sent Nikolai back each time with the message: "I pray 100 лестовки/lestovki (woolen beads on a Russian rosary) each night to the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), and I pray 100 lestovki to Hristos and the saints, and the Господи помилуй/Gospodi Pomilui (Lord, have mercy) prayer is ever on my lips."

On the night of May 17, 1980, Masha awoke at midnight from a dream that puzzled her and kept her awake the rest of the night. She had dreamt that she had died and an angel had lifted her soul out of her body and carried her through several toll-houses, where she was cleared of all sin. Then she was carried in the arms of her guardian angel up to the gates of heaven, where she was met by Hristos, who said to her, "Enter, for you have done my will." When she entered through the gate she was taken to a garden where two rivers flowed, one of milk and the other of honey. On the banks of the rivers grew all manners of fruit. Then she was lifted up on a cloud to a beautiful city, in the center of which sat Hristos on his throne and his light shone all around like a thousand suns. She heard an angelic choir sing a cappella:

"Светися, светися, новии Иерусалиме,  
слава бо Господня на тебе возсия.  
Ликуй ныне и веселися сионе,  
ты же чистая Богородица. "  
(Shine, shine, new Jerusalem,  
for the glory of the Lord has shone upon you.  
Rejoice today and be exceedingly glad Sion,  
you are the pure unblemished Mother of God.)

Then she saw the Bogoroditsa ascend to the right hand of Hristos, and Hristos took off his crown and put it on her head. He said to her: "Accept this crown, O Mother, which my Father gave to me when I defeated death and Satan." At that moment Masha saw Ivan step up to the left side to receive a blessing and a crown from Hristos, and that's when she awoke.

Lestovka, Rosary (of the Mother-of-God)



## Chapter 22 -- "Beheading of St. John the Baptist"

During the same night that Masha was having her dream, Ivan Bogolubov and Sylvester Bistrohodov were sitting around a campfire and talking. The two Mexican workers, who had come in a separate car, were already fast asleep in their own tent.

"Do you feel something strange in the air?" asked Sylvester, who was very sensitive to his surroundings. "It's so quiet."

"I hadn't thought of it," said Ivan. "I was thinking about our life here in the wilderness, working for a living so far from home instead of being on the farm and close to the family."

"Kind of reminds you of the wilderness life of Иоанн Предтеча/Joann Predtecha (Joann the Forerunner), doesn't it?" said Sylvester Bistrohodov, whose last name meant "one who walks fast."

"Except that we don't have to face those monstrous animals like he did," said Ivan. "Did you see the ikon of his life where is standing in the wilderness and holding a chalice in his hands, and on his left side are miniature representations of his life in the wilderness with strange beasts prowling around?"

"I've seen that one," said Sylvester. "That's the one where he is represented as the winged Angel of the wilderness, and he has a round golden halo outlined in red around his head. There's another one, which I think has more details about his life, and that's the ikon where he is represented as the winged Angel of the desert, holding his decapitated head and a scroll in his left hand. I counted twenty scenes in miniature around the central ikon. There's one scene that I like, and that's where the young Ioann is led out of the wilderness by his guardian angel."

Suddenly, Sylvester stopped talking and lifted his head as if he were listening for something in the far distance.

"Did you hear that?" asked Sylvester, turning with a frightful look in his eyes to face Ivan.

"Hear what?" asked Ivan with a puzzled look on his face. He wrinkled his forehead.

"I thought I heard a rumbling sound," said Sylvester. "It sounded like hollow drums or like thunder somewhere deep in the forest and over the mountain."

"I didn't hear anything," said Ivan. "You must be hearing things."

Sylvester stared into the orange-red center of the fire and thought deeply for a minute.

"Do you think it's true about Ante-Hrist, that he is supposed to come soon?" asked Sylvester with a downcast face. The thought of Ante-Hrist weighed heavily on his mind.

"There has been talk that his mark is already circulating through the international computer system," said Ivan. "I've seen pamphlets which show that an invisible laser-tattooed mark will be made on the right hand or on the forehead, and some even say that the mark will be the number 666."

"That's supposed to be the number of the beast, which is the number of a man, according to the Revelation of St. John," said Sylvester.

"And no man will be able to buy or sell anything without that mark," added Ivan. "Some claim that the mark will replace all credit cards, which are just forerunners of the Ante-Hrist."

"When is this supposed to happen?" asked Sylvester.

"1984," said Ivan. "Some of the Old Believers are already selling their homes and moving either back to Brazil or to Bolivia, where they say the Ante-Hrist will not rule."

"So America will be in the hands of Ante-Hrist?" asked Sylvester.

"Along with the rest of the world, except for Brazil, Bolivia, and a few other places," said Ivan.

"Are you going to sell your house?" asked Sylvester.

"I'm going to wait a few years and see what happens," said Ivan. "But if you stay behind or if the Ante-Hrist comes before we're able to get away, make sure you don't take his mark or number on your right hand or forehead or you will

burn in the fire for eternity. Let them kill you or chop off your head, but do not let them put the mark of the beast on you."

Ivan's words got louder and louder as he spoke. His words began to echo into the dark woods, and Sylvester thought he felt the ground move beneath his feet.

"Did you feel that?" asked Sylvester. He stood up and listened with his feet.

"Feel what?" asked Ivan. He remained seated on a round rock.

"I thought I felt the earth move," said Sylvester. "It felt as if it shifted right under my feet."

"Do you think it's the mountain?" asked Ivan. He looked south-east in the direction of Mt. St. Helens.

"I think she's up to something big," said Sylvester. He thought he heard something again, and he turned in the direction of the river. "Get my flashlight, quick. I think there's something in the bushes."

Ivan ran to the tent nearby to get a flashlight. When he came back, they went together along a narrow path. Sylvester shone the flashlight and Ivan followed close behind.

"There," said Sylvester. He stopped and flashed the flashlight on a herd of deer. "It looks like they're moving downstream. They must sense some danger, and they're trying to get away before anything happens. They're following their instinct."

"Do you think we should do as they do and take off before anything happens?" asked Ivan.

"You're the boss," said Sylvester.

"We only have a day's work to do," said Ivan. "Why don't we go to sleep now and wake up with the sun. We can clear the rest of the trees tomorrow, and then we'll leave the rest of the work of hauling the trees away for Weyerhaeuser."

The men walked back to their camp and went to sleep in their tent. Sylvester woke up several times during the night thinking that he had heard something rumbling in the far

distance. The ominous sound seemed to be getting nearer each time he heard it.

"That's funny," said Ivan when he awoke in the morning. He sat up when he saw that it was light outside already. "I had a dream about Masha, but I can't remember anything else about the dream. All I remember is that I saw Masha."

"That's probably because she's thinking about you," said Sylvester as he crawled out of his sleeping bag. He rubbed his eyes, yawned and stretched his arms out like a cat. "Well, let's eat breakfast and get to work."

One of the Mexican men had already eaten breakfast and was already on the nearby hill. The sound of his chain saw could be heard whining away like a nest of bees. The other Mexican worker was still sleeping.

"It must be at least seven o'clock," said Ivan, who usually did not wear a watch when he worked in the woods.

"It was seven o'clock when you woke me up with your dream," said Sylvester. "I checked my watch in the bag."

Ivan and Sylvester worked together side by side for about an hour when suddenly the ominous sound that Sylvester had sensed the night before turned into a deafening roar. The mountain had erupted! A scorching heat struck them down, and within minutes they were crawling desperately over hot ground to find the creek near their devastated campsite. The burns on their bodies and the ash in their lungs made them both cry out with excruciating pain. The struggle for survival didn't seem worth it. However, the men struggled as much as they could to survive their personal ordeal in the overwhelming darkness, fire, and ash.

It was late in the afternoon when rescue workers found Sylvester Bistrohodov and his Mexican fellow-worker near Sylvester's pickup truck. Ivan had separated from Sylvester hours before in search of a route to safety, and the other Mexican worker had panicked and fled in his own direction somewhere. Sylvester lost consciousness almost immediately after being lifted into the rescue helicopter.

Sylvester regained consciousness at Portland's Emmanuel Hospital and was able to tell Masha, who came to visit him

the next day, that Ivan had tried to find a way out instead of waiting for a rescue team.

"Oh, my God," cried Masha as she looked at the burned victim who could barely talk because of the pain in his lungs. "Why didn't he listen to me and stay home?"

Sylvester couldn't tell her about his premonitions the night before the eruption. His whole body shook in continuous cold spasms in an attempt to neutralize the almost totally burned body.

"I even had a dream that night," said Masha. "And I saw Ivan."

"He told me he dreamed about you, too," said Sylvester as he slowly struggled to get each word out of his throat. He couldn't say any more. He slipped back into unconsciousness. Masha looked at the body that was covered with white cream from head to foot. She thought to herself, 'Maybe it's better that Ivan is dead if this is what he has to live through.'

Nevertheless, Masha and Nikolai made a special request to the rescue teams to search for Ivan. The search was made, but no body was found. Ten days after the fatal explosion, Sylvester slipped away into the all-embracing bosom of the Bogoroditsa (Mother of God), whose name was on his lips in constant prayer for the salvation of his soul.

Fifty-two days after the cataclysmic eruption, Ivan's body was finally found. His ash-covered body was found clinging to a young hemlock tree that stood on a hill overlooking the North Fork of the Toutle River. The tree that had been his livelihood became in the end his cross.

Ivan was given a decent Old Believer burial in one of their private cemeteries in the country. A prayer was said at the 'панихида/panihida' (mass for the dead) for the soul of Ivan Bogolubov:

“Господи Иисусе Христе Сыне Божии,  
милостив ради пречистыя ти матере,  
и всех святых,  
душу усопшаго раба твоего Ивана.”



(Lord Isous Hristos, Son of God,  
be merciful to the soul of the deceased, your servant Ivan,  
for the sake of your pure Mother  
and all the saints.)

Masha cried, and so did the other women who  
sympathized with her, as the mass continued:

“Усопшия рабы твоего Ивана,  
в недрах Авраама и Исаака и Якова,  
в селех праведных упокой,  
и нас помилуй и спаси,  
яко благ и человеколюбец.”  
(Bring the deceased, your servant Ivan,  
into the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
into the place of the righteous,  
and have mercy on us and save us,  
for you are merciful and a lover of humanity.)

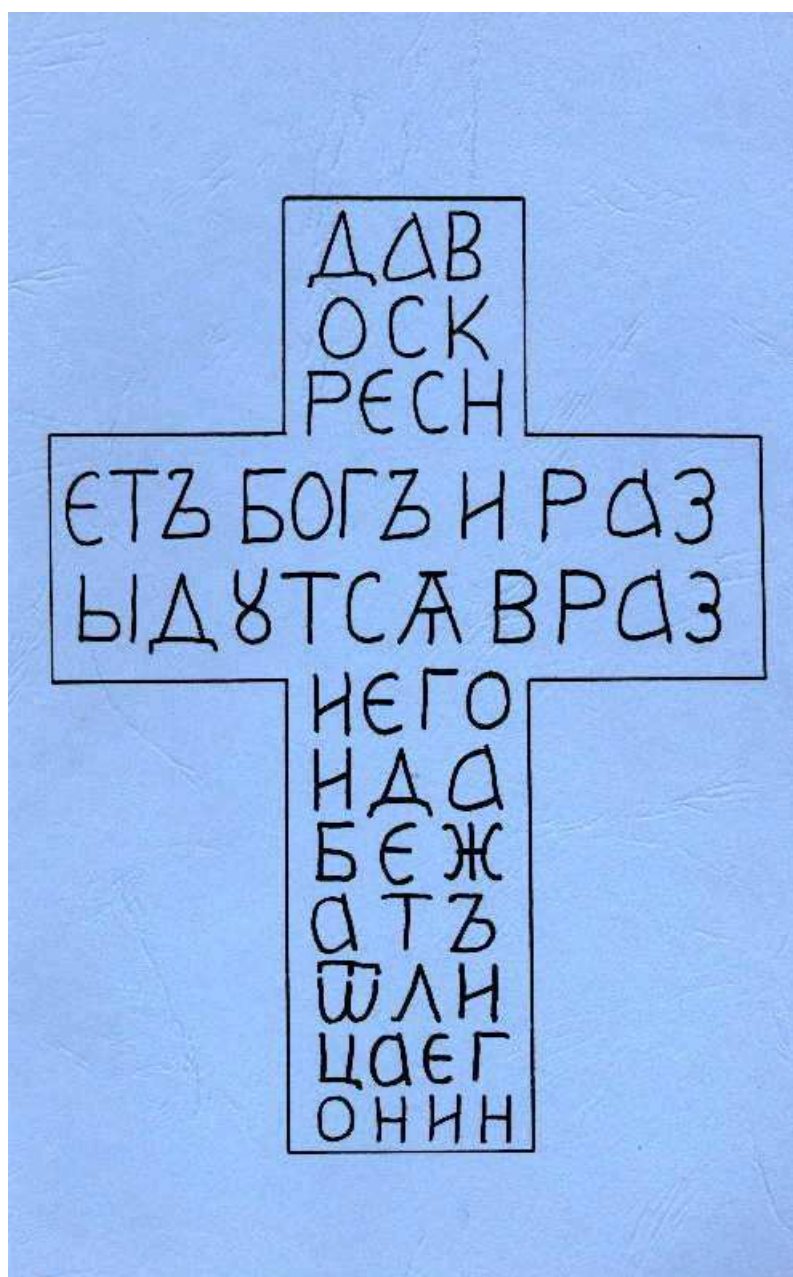
The box in which Ivan's linen-wrapped body was laid had  
been previously nailed with stones. After the funeral service  
it was lowered into the rectangular hole that was dug out by  
Andrey and Nikolai. The friends and relatives each passed  
by the lowered box and threw three handfuls of dirt on the  
box. As was their custom, the children who prayed for the  
soul of Ivan were given a small sum of money by Masha.

Afterwards a 'кутя/kutya' (a dish composed of rice boiled  
with raisins and served with honey) was eaten. Forty days  
later Masha had a special service for Ivan, and prayers for  
his soul were chanted once again.

Several weeks after that, on the holyday commemorating  
the beheading of John the Baptist, Masha stood with the  
other worshippers and chanted praises to the man who had  
died for the truth and was a martyr to the Christian belief.  
Masha couldn't help but think of her Ivan whenever the name  
Ioann was chanted, and she remembered him telling her  
when they first met that his father had named him Ivan

because he was born on the same day that John the Baptist became a martyr.

With the thought of Ivan-Ioann on her mind, Masha bowed to the ground three times as all the candles were snuffed out at the end of the service. A quiet darkness spread over the throng of Old Believers. Then they all turned around as one body and one spirit and quietly walked out of the church to meet the new day.



## **NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:**

Back in the 1990's, when I put my book on the Old Believers out on the internet for free use, I had a guestbook for a short period of time. I had some very positive comments:

I feel that after reading your work, that the entire history of my family has been described by you. Also many questions about the faith have been answered. God Bless you. -- Simon

Wow! I was amazed when I came across your site. I am a direct descendant of a community of staravrya in Australia. I was very interested to read your book and I would like to find out more about your background and knowledge of this community. -- Adrian

A wonderful novel and collection of resources about the Old Belief and Old Believers. Thanks be to God that this information is available on the Internet, as there is not much information about our Holy Faith and Traditions available anywhere outside our own circles. As an Old Believer living in America, fluent in the Russian language, I am very pleased by this site. -- Theodosy

I appreciate the effort you are putting on your site toward dispensing correct information about the Old Believers. -- Anna

I very much appreciate all the information on the Old Belief and Old Believers that you have endeavored to put on the Internet. As a Russian-speaking Old Believer, I really am thankful for the truthful and accurate information you provide on the Internet. I have a question, echoed by someone in your guestbook on your website: Are you an Old Believer? I would very much appreciate an answer to this question. Thank you very much. – William

My response to William in 1999 was:

William, thank you for your positive feedback. The answer to your question would have to be, "No, I am not an Old Believer." However, after having worked in the elementary school with Russian Old Believers (91 School, Canby School District, OR), I feel like I have adopted a lot of their religion (especially the Bogoroditsa, Mother of God concepts). I don't dress in the Old Believer clothes; however, in school I always stick up for the Old Believer children and parents' rights. I also teach a mini-class (elective) in Russian for Russian Old Believers. I have now worked with them in various roles for 23 years. They have been like a "mission" or destiny in my life -- for they made me realize my ancient roots in Mother Russia. I am glad you found my "Work" with the Russian Old Believers interesting. By the way, I now have Russian Old Believer children in my class who are the children of the first children I taught way back in my early days of education in 1976. Paul J. Wigowsky

Final Note: I retired from the same school in 2003.