

AZERBAIJAN, TURKEY & LATVIA

One of our team is currently seeking to meet up with contacts from Iran who are seeking baptism. She is also addressing issues with the Iranian brethren still seeking to get out of Turkey, and we ask for your prayers in her mission. Another trip is also being made to brethren and contacts in Kurdistan who are in severe difficulties, and this also could do with prayerful support.

Meanwhile, the Lord's work continues in the Baltic states. We continue following up on over 1000 active contacts, as well as seeking to help out the many brethren and sisters caught up on the downside of the transition from a former USSR republic to a member of the EU. At present this transition is leaving some people getting wealthier and yet many others [especially Russians in Eastern Latvia] being pushed down to subsistence economy and even below into life-threatening poverty. We really appreciated a visit from Marcus & Gwladys [Heaster] accompanied by Brother Graham Mitchell from the UK. Graham filled us in on the exciting mission work he and his sons are quietly doing in Eastern Zambia.

We are very pleased to report that more Bible Basics contacts have responded to the Lord's call and been baptized since we last reported to you: ALEKSANDR, NINA, KARINA, IEVA and LIGA. They need your prayers as they begin to witness in areas where we do not have many nearby brethren and sisters.

Photo: Brother Aleksandr just before his baptism



Photo: New sisters Nina and Karina bond in fellowship with two other sisters immediately after their baptisms



Sister Karina works three month 'shifts' at a Russian restaurant on a Mediterranean island, and is very keen to make her witness there, upon which we pray the Lord's blessing.

Many Eastern European brethren and sisters will now be seeking employment in the West following the EU expansion, and we commend them to their Lord's care in the often unstable circumstances they will find themselves in. May their dispersion be a means of the truth spreading.

We are now at the end of another Winter, and we have to remind you again of the heating crisis which there is for many poorer brethren and sisters in Lithuania and Latvia. The Soviet style blocks in which many live have no way of regulating the heating; they were built during Soviet times, when oil was cheap. The heating systems are very inefficient. The cost of heating the flats in Winter is often equal to or more than an old person's pension. If the bills aren't paid, they have the flat taken away from them by the State in order to pay the bill to the heating company. In the past of course, before heating provision was privatized, it was the same State who owned

the flats, the heating, the oil and everything. Many elderly or sick or unemployed brethren and sisters are therefore really desperate during the Winter months, when the fuel bills are highest. Even those in rural areas still have to find heating material to burn.

The elderly and those without relatives [a sad feature of the breakdown of the family unit during many decades of Communism] are again left desperate for funds to buy firewood if they are too old or ill to collect it. There is also growing concern about the destruction of Latvia's forests for firewood and it is more difficult to just go into the forest and take away firewood.

The BBFU gave around £3000 towards heating issues this Winter, and now we have only about £3000 in our total balance for all our work and responsibilities. We are looking ahead to the problems to be faced next Winter, God willing. Perhaps individuals and ecclesias could consider adopting individuals who need heating support?

Photo: Newly installed electric wall heater



Photo: A terminally sick brother [now fallen asleep in Christ] in a cold rural home [note how people are dressed even indoors]



Photo: Sis Svetlana's poverty stricken rural kitchen; note the water bucket. All hot water has to be heated on the fire.



Yet in this poverty, the truth is spreading, both in terms of baptisms, and also in the way brethren and sisters are undoubtedly growing in their appreciation of what it means to be in Christ, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. This is our greatest joy to report.

p.s. One of our team is soon to make another visit to the UNHCR in Geneva to thank them in person for their work for our refugee brethren and sisters. Any last minute thank you emails can be sent c/o unitedchristadelphians@bbie.org