

Belarus, Russia, USA, Philippines, December 2004

Belarus December 2004

A brief visit was made to address some welfare issues and difficulties faced by some of our members as a result of the authoritarian line taken by the Government here, upon which we've commented in previous announcements. Protestant groups continue to be banned. We're pleased to say that despite some problems, our brethren are coping and safe at the moment.

We were also able to attend the beginning of a low key Christmas gathering organized by two sisters, aimed at Chernobyl orphans. As previously reported, there is a huge incidence of thyroid and other cancers as the long term consequence of the Chernobyl disaster. Whole areas of southern Belarus, where we have several brethren and sisters, are uninhabitable and certainly unable to produce crops which would pass the most basic EU safety regulations. The tragedy of the area is somewhat overlooked in the face of so many other international tragedies. We have several brethren and sisters sick as a result of radiation, and some have died. We are grateful for vitamins and financial aid which has been sent to those in need.

The Christmas Bible School for kids was wonderful. The CBM had kindly donated copies of the Russian Christadelphian Sunday School lessons, and the CCM are grateful for their cooperation in this. Some of the 13 and 14 year olds are really switched on and responded enthusiastically to our discussions about 'The meaning of Jesus for today', demonstrating some good Bible knowledge. We were able to distribute T-shirts donated from the UK, and also Bible Basics rulers and Bible reading calendars, encouraging them to read daily according to the Companion.

To top it all, we were able to interview and baptize ANDREJ, a highly educated and intelligent 49 year old man who has truly come to the Lord in Truth.

God willing, we will seek to continue supporting the Chernobyl orphans and young people in the area, as they continue to study weekly with a local sister.

Photos:



Photo: Children with their T-Shirts, rulers, and Bible reading calendars.



Photo: Teaching from the CBM Sunday School lessons



Photo: Reading from the newly produced Belarussian language young people's Bible

Russia

Carelink readers will recall the dramas related to our young brother Leonid and his military tribunal. He was finally given alternative service, and he has now been sent off to a military controlled factory in the Urals. He informed us that he is living in the hostel there, but they give him no money for food. The factory is shut until Jan. 10, and he will only receive money after a month. He has about \$10 of his own to live on until then. He's been told he will work very hard, the term of service is a tough 3.5 years, he will be a welder, must be prepared to work in dangerous conditions, and if he doesn't work hard enough or well enough, he will be sent into the army. So much for 'alternative service for conscientious objectors'. We have sent him some funds but he urgently asks for our prayers. He is a young 18, and very scared. He says he is reading his Bible a lot as he waits for work to start on Jan. 10.

Preaching In US Prisons: Update

The faithful work of distributing Bible Basics in prisons has produced some wonderful results in America; here is the latest update from Sis Marilyn Seagoe

We have some good news from here. A few brothers and sisters of the SF Peninsula Ecclesia, who were approved to visit Kenneth in the C.T.F. Prison in Soledad, did so on Saturday, December 18 to meet him and hear a confession of his faith. Now we have wonderful news that the Chaplain will be baptizing him at about 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 26. We rejoice in this as Kenneth has been looking forward to being baptized for quite a while. We had to have approval to visit him first. Please remember Kenneth in your prayers this weekend. Now Kenneth will have a new life in Christ. I believe God really has called him out as he is the second inmate to 'find Bible Basics' and want to know more in seeking God's truth. Kenneth will be our second inmate to be baptized now. Praise the Lord! By the way, I had Bro. David MacCharles meet up with Kenneth and they have been giving each other spiritual support when they can meet on Wednesdays for Bible Study. They are both in different sections of the prison.

I have heard from quite a number of inmates in prisons now all over the US now. I do have inmates passing the word along for us, even from one jail to another. It is surprising work. I do believe the Lord is giving us what we can handle to give them the attention they need. It is hard to find brothers and sisters who are willing to write to prisoners because many people today want to e-mail. It does take a commitment to write letters and to be careful to not use a home address or last names of people. We have had incidents where the Chaplains in the Jail or prison have done research on The Christadelphians and tell the inmates we are a 'cult'. I feel that because of this, it is good to go slow and have the inmates be an example of brethren in Christ as a witness.

We just got back from Goleta, near Santa Barbara, today. It was wonderful to see all the brothers and sisters there again and the visiting ones. Bro. Larry was there and I was so happy to see him because he has been in prison before. Bro. Larry came in to the Truth many years before I began doing this work. He is going to be a help for us in this work. He is a good example of a brother making it in society again and being active in the ecclesia. I'm really concerned about brothers being accepted into the ecclesia and a routine when they get released.

Love in Christ,
Sis. Marilyn

Philippines

We're delighted to report that the ongoing distribution of Bible Basics and holding of Bible Basics study classes along with counselling for the families of alcoholics, has been blessed with the following baptisms: ANGELOU, ARNEL, ALGEN, MENDY and RENE. They are all in the Moslem controlled area of the southern Philippines. We've asked the ACBM to let us know names and addresses of their nearest contacts in an attempt to work together in this exciting development. We need to keep praying for this work, as it continues in the teeth of about every conceivable opposition.

from your brothers and sisters of CCM