

Rebuilding Sister Nina's Farm August 2006

As mentioned several times on recent carelinks, we've been especially concerned with the plight of our dear sister Nina in Latvia, whose farm buildings and animals were burnt down in May, as a result of arson by some hunters who demanded food and lodging from her as they passed through hunting bears and deer.



Br Steve Jones with evidence of the arson [petrol can etc]

She's been living in a shed since then, and we were faced with the problem of her accommodation and also her loss of equipment, animals and other things required by her as a subsistence farmer to grow enough food over the Summer in order to be able to feed off it during the long Winter. She lives several km. walk from the nearest road and shop, and at 73 years old she has health problems and a very bad back, aggravated by needing to water her crops and weed them by hand. Her stock of potatoes had all but run out- here's a picture taken in May of her potatoes in store:



potatoes in store



She's now down to just a bucket full of them in August



Her back pains her whenever she moves- this is a typical picture of her walking

The immediate problem she faced was that there had been no rain since May- and her crop of potatoes were withered, so she'd be left with no potatoes to eat this Winter [potatoes are her staple diet]. Her well had dried up, and she had to walk a few hundred metres to a stream, from where she took water in a small jug- it was all she had. Her remoteness and poverty is hard to explain. The clothes she's wearing in the photos were all donated to her.



The stream from where Nina got water to water her potatoes

Watering the plants is back breaking work for a 73 year old with a heart problem [in the photo you can see the cable and pipe for our irrigation solution- more of that later!]:



cable and pipe for our irrigation solution

Our first task was to at least buy her a watering can- distance from the shops, lack of transport and money mean that anything she can't barter for [with her few crops and strawberries] is largely beyond her.



Sis Nina delighted with her new watering can

The next task was to install some irrigation- a bigger job than we thought. We pay tribute to Steve & Robin Jones who worked so hard and with so much initiative in order to help our sister over the last two weeks. We got 200 metres of piping, 200 metres of electric cable, some valves, a pump- and after many setbacks (not least due to the loss of current from a hotwired electrical connection over 200 metres] , Steve & Robin set up Nina's field with water.

Photo: Laying the piping from Nina's crops down to the stream [Nina was quite overcome by it all, she's not had much experience of grace from human beings in the course of a long, hard life]



laying the electric cable to the pump



Steve setting up the pump and filter over the muddy stream

After many setbacks, the great moment came when water was finally gushing out over Nina's crops. One of the wonderful things about Sister Nina is how close she walks with her Lord. All the time she is muttering Bible verses, and bursting into prayer. When we finally got water through, she burst into a passionate prayer of praise that would've sounded at home on the lips of King David.



Nina's praise for the water

Soon Nina was watering her crops, with no need to get each litre of water from the stream- and she was also able to water many of her crops which she'd just been unable to water.



Nina watering the crops

The warm weather and regular watering made for a wonderful growing season- within 2 weeks, our sister's potatoes and carrots had rallied and she was able to harvest them. The 'before and after' photos of her crops over those 2 weeks are simply amazing!



Sis. Nina joyfully harvests a carrot

She'd given up watering the carrots as she just couldn't manage to get enough water from the stream for them. With the irrigation system, she watered them day and night with relative ease. Nina's potatoes are now being harvested by her, and it was a joy to eat some with her.



Robin and Nina with the fresh potatoes



Regularly as she harvested the potatoes, our sister burst into thankful prayer

Nina realizes that at her age it's not that realistic to have cows again. She'll miss the milk, but she plans to have chickens. The next phase of assisting Nina involved building a new barn and place for the chickens. She will live in the Winter with her son, so please don't think of her living in a shed over Winter. Although he's alcoholic he was very impressed by our care for Nina and she reports a great change in heart from him since we've been involved in helping her over her calamity in the last 2 months. We will likely assist her with firewood, heating, food and medicine. The foundations for the new building have now been laid.



Steve with the foundations in the early stages

We purchased timber and cement, and we hope soon to report on the completion of the building.



Purchasing timber and cement

It's been a wonderful experience sharing the grace of God with one of His special daughters, to help someone who really does try to help themselves, who is in poverty through totally no fault of their own, and to see in her and even in her son a recognition and response to that grace. To say that Nina is grateful to all of you who assisted her is an under-statement- she really and truly is, and wishes us to express her thanks to you all. As she says, only in the Kingdom will we be able to meet and communicate fully with all the faithful. May that time soon come.

Whilst writing about Latvia, we're pleased to report that our new deaf members are progressing well in their new faith. We're also pleased to report the baptisms and receiving into fellowship of RUSLAN, OLGA and ULDIS. The brotherhood in the Baltic wish to deeply thank Steve & Robin for all their care and very hard work during their stay here.

With love and joy from your brothers and sisters of CCM