

Winter heating / Madagascar, October 2006

We reported earlier this year a number of baptisms in Madagascar, and the terrible poverty of some of the sisters there, who were unable to send their children to school. We've been able to forward funds to enable the children to get into school for this school year. However, in the desperate shanty towns, this has attracted attention, and we're sorry to report that one of our brethren, brother R, has been targetted by gangs there. We've now had confirmation from different sources that he was beaten several times, including by members of his former [trinitarian] church who objected to his departure from them, in the hope of extorting funds from him. He was beaten with thongs and had cigarettes extinguished on his arms and back. We've received photos of our brother and we present them so you can pray for him. We've provided funds for him to move to another part of the island.



Back in Europe, we continue assisting with heating bills and distributing aid to those in need in preparation for the Winter. As the rich get richer and the poor get poorer in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR, a crisis of no small proportions is developing in Latvia especially, where rental prices are going to be deregulated after January 1st and Government support for such accomodation withdrawn. The following clip from an English language newspaper in Latvia estimates that at least 20,000 people will be made homeless in Riga alone from January 1st, and probably many more. This impacts a number of our brethren and sisters and we ask for your prayers for them. Many receive pensions which aren't enough to live on, at least not over the Winter [hence our assistance with Winter heating costs], and a sharp rise in rent will make life absolutely impossible for some.

Clips from the newspaper re. homelessness:



However, the spread of the Gospel continues. We're happy to report the baptism of RIVA, and to say that over 50 brethren, sisters and contacts gathered for our Bible weekend. Again we were delighted to welcome brethren from neighbouring Lithuania and Estonia. We were sorry that Br Norman Durk fainted on the way to the airport [although he's OK now] , but Br David Bonner [Walton, UK ecclesia] gave some good talks which were much appreciated.

Photo: Br David giving the exhortation with br Janis translating



The Bible School was a good opportunity to pass out clothes and other welfare to those attending.

Photo: Sisters trying on spectacles and choosing clothes



Whilst the Bonners were over we were able to visit some rural brethren & sisters and assess what could be done to help fix up their homes, especially delapidated outside toilets, against the Winter. Rural homes generally feature a wood burning stove which heats up a column of bricks in a metal covered column in the centre of the home. Some of these are now rusted through, leaking smoke and fumes constantly into the rooms. We'll try to fix them up.

We hope to report more on the purchase of bio toilets next time, God willing.

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM