

## **Russia, Belarus, Winter Heating, September 2007**

A huge trip has been made over the last 2 weeks throughout the vast nation of Russia, from North to South and West to East [and back again]- and also the length of Belarus. The aim was to visit isolated brothers and sisters and assist them with our Winter heating program, and also to visit contacts who have studied the Bible Basics lessons and were interested in baptism. Not everyone of them who was visited was ready for baptism- our hope is that they will be in the future. We can only provide a few cameos in order to focus your prayers. In all, we're delighted to report the baptisms of SASHA, SLAVA, DMITRY, GEORGIJ, KONSTANTINE, VIKTOR, NINA P and NINA I.

Throughout this trip we were very conscious of God's saving and guiding hand, through the Angels of His presence, through His word and above all through His Son. At the same time, those same Angels [or perhaps other Angels?] were active with those working with sister Chenoor to bring her to safety in Holland; and also with Brother Sam Bradley as he made a Carelinks visit to Nepal [report forthcoming, God willing].

BROTHER DMITRY had a major accident 2 years ago. He's now 22. His mother sold their apartment and bought a temporary summer house, out in the bush, where they now live; she used the funds released to pay for various operations for him. He can now move both arms and both legs about 10 centimetres, but can't walk or urinate independently. His mum is totally devoted to him. He sits in his small room all day and reads Bible Basics. It was an honour to baptize him. He now has a mobile phone through which we can keep in touch more conveniently. Think of him as he spends his days alone far out in the Russian countryside.

We gave welfare towards Winter heating expenses, and the radiator you can see in front of him.



SISTER NINA lives in a remote spot in Belarus where she survives as a subsistence farmer, preserving what she grows over the Summer to eat over the Winter. She has been in touch with sister Janet Clutton of the UK for some time, and feels very much as part of their family. Janet sent her some lovely coats, a black one and a white one, which are Nina's most prized possessions. That is, after the photo album of Janet's ecclesia and family. She looks at the photos, she says, every single day, and wept when explaining how grateful she is to have such a family in Christ. Our visit was in order to baptize her grandson SASHA.



The water was pretty cold, as everyone is waiting for the snow to come down. The access to the local lake is shared with cows, and you can see Sasha gingerly stepping past cow dung in order to get to the lake edge. We also bought Nina firewood for Winter- you can see her here with her son, wearing Janet's white coat.



SISTER LARISA works in a factory in Belarus, her team of 4 people have the job of changing over the bobbins , weighing 300 kg. each. She gave Bible Basics to her team and they have become best friends based around the things they've learnt. We were able to baptize VIKTOR and NINA, and were also able to give Winter heating support to Larisa and Nina- they work for just a few \$ per day doing very heavy work.



SISTER VIKTORIJA was baptized as a result of the preaching of brother Alexei Hodusov, who distributes Bible Basics to all and sundry and has for many years, since his baptism in 1992, sought by all means to persuade others of the Truth. Viktorija was a high school teacher in Abkhazia, but fled the ethnic cleansing there and is now living in Russia without documents- according to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abkhazia#The\\_Abkhazian\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abkhazia#The_Abkhazian_War) over 30,000 people died during the ethnic cleansing and large numbers became refugees. Being without documents means she has no social support. Her health is weak and she walks with a stick. She cooks potato pies and takes them to the bus station to sell every day; she also grows grapes, and we did the memorial meeting using freshly squeezed grape juice. She reads the Bible all the time and has an amazing familiarity with the text of Scripture, it really is her study and reflection all the day. She was been preaching to others and we were delighted to be able to baptize her relative GEORGIJ. We gave her Winter welfare support and she immediately wrote a letter of thanks as you can see. Please pray for her to get documents, so that she can receive some kind of pension, and also for her brave efforts to spread the Gospel further.



SISTER GALINA's windows are a classic case which CCM tries to assist with. Whilst vaguely in her area, we paid a special visit to our sister and were much encouraged by her faithfulness despite a very very difficult life. She lives in a home which is really intended as a Summer house; the windows are seriously broken and she has tried to fix them up with everything she can get hold of, from a garden spade to pieces of asbestos. We gave her funds towards fixing the windows.



SISTER NINA P is the wife of Brother Vyacheslav, who was baptized by our brother Alexei Hodusov some time ago. Vyacheslav leads the family in Bible readings and the study of Bible Basics each day. His wife has been very thoroughly prepared. It was with very genuine joy that we heard her confession of faith and walked with them both and one of the children to a nearby river. Especially moving was Vyacheslav's charging of his wife before her baptism, urging her to pick up the cross and follow her Lord who had died for her.



Don't be put off by the camouflage jackets they're wearing! They really are very poor and use whatever clothes they can get. It's common in such poor villages for young men who return from their army service to bring back with them various clothes, guns and other items and sell them off. Vyacheslav and Nina are truly separate from the spirit of this world, but the set of army fatigues are their best set of clothes- as you can see, she wears the top and he wears the bottom. They have recently been blessed with a fourth child. Nina has never had a pram, but they found and reconstructed one from a garbage heap- and so they're rather proud of it. Again we supported them with their Winter heating expenses. Their oldest daughter is preparing for baptism, and Vyacheslav preaches to all around him. Let's pray for them in their austere lives and great devotion to God's word.



BROTHER KONSTANTIN is a medical student in a Russian city. Some time ago he stated in an internet chat room that he didn't understand or agree with the Trinity; someone told him he was like a Jehovah's Witness or Christadelphian. For some time, our new brother has been researching both groups, and we're delighted to say that he was visited and baptized on this trip.



These are only cameos of some of the lives with which God has led us to intersect in the sharing of His truth and the grace of His Son. We pray as Paul did for fruit to come forth from all this work, to His glory.

It's possible to contribute to the Winter Heating program online, see [http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter\\_Heating.html](http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter_Heating.html) ; or you can email our treasurer Bro John Thatcher direct at [info@carelinks.net](mailto:info@carelinks.net) about how to donate.