

Winter Heating, Deaf Family. Baltic Baptisms, Carelinks UK Conference 2009

God willing, the UK Carelinks Conference will be held in Chippenham, UK January 16-18 2009. We've put together an exciting program, seeking to explore and face head on the issues which currently face our community as we seek to effectively impact the world with the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We have a total of 12 speakers from throughout the UK and further afield, including special guest Brother Charlie Klennert from the USA. Have a look at the program at <http://www.carelinks.net/doc/events> .

- and register early! For more details and to register intended attendance, please contact Br Steve Gretton. steve.gretton@googlemail.com

We're delighted to report that progress continues in the preaching of the Gospel throughout the former USSR especially in the Baltic states. We're delighted to report the baptism and receiving into fellowship of SERGEJ and RYSZARDAS in Lithuania. Sergej has been a committed Christian all his life. He finished his degree in veterinary science, but had to do his army service straight afterwards, which he refused. As a result, he was stripped of his degree. He insisted before the tribunal: "I'll take a spade in my hand but not a rifle". He was sent to work in a 'stroibatalion' , building bridges. He's full of wonderful accounts of how the hand of Providence worked to protect him and even bless him, having many experiences reminiscent of Joseph.

Chatting over coffee with him is really quite a gripping experience as he tells his stories:



Sergej now works as a builder, and has relocated to Lithuania where he is now married with children. All along he has sought for Biblical truth, rejecting the trinity, immortal soul and other standard doctrines as he passed through various churches. He now truly rejoices in the truth.

RYSZARDAS was given a copy of Bible Basics by a friend some years ago- and it's falling apart from having been read and underlined so much. He took time off work to spend a whole day with us, discussing 'difficult passages' and everything connected with his new faith. By midnight, we were still at it. We slept the night with Brother Valdas (who has a newborn baby) and although Ryszardas had to go into work for a few hours the next morning, we spent much of the next day in further deep Biblical discussion, culminating in his baptism and a very happy breaking of bread. He will be a great addition to the ecclesia there in Vilnius.

WINTER HEATING

We are now well into our Winter heating program, having purchased wood, wood granules and other heating fuel; and we're already driving around distributing them, along with warm clothes kindly donated. The current financial crisis is hitting poorer countries harder, as Governments try to reduce expenditure. Latvia is reducing the minimum wage by 50% to only 180US\$ / month [despite spiralling inflation, especially for food and fuel]; and old people now get no travel discounts until they are 75 years old rather than 65. If everyone has to take a step down the ladder, the poorer- simply go right under.



Although Latvia and Australia are about as far apart as you can get, it was a significant moment to give a Latvian sister a warm coat donated by an Australian sister who no longer needs it due to global warming in her area:



We're also meeting heating bills of several elderly sisters in urban areas. We're all truly thankful for your support. Please do continue it.

We mentioned previously the bad situation faced by our deaf brother and sister, who live some km. off the nearest road in the forest. They are being driven out of their home, the home where sister Marite has always lived, and it's really so distressing for them as they have nowhere to go and she's never lived anywhere else. They will be staying with Duncan & Cindy and then will move in to the home we're reconstructing, although it's about 300 km from where they live. It's so hard for them to face new situations being deaf and having had limited education and exposure to the world.

We spent a whole day writing notes back and forth trying to understand their situation, and provide comfort and reassurance we won't leave them with no roof above their head. We also broke bread with them, they say they find this "very comforting", which indeed it is. If anyone happens to know the Russian deaf sign language, that would be SO helpful. As it is, we're consuming whole exercise books with our conversations, and at least learning how to speak so that they can lip read us.

We suspect we're going to have to end up supporting them longer term at this time, although some sisters are trying to find them employment in a factory near the home we're rebuilding. Anyone who may be interested in 'adopting' this lovely family is welcome to contact us at this stage, although as ever we'll try to help them to maximum independence rather than dependence.

Please do pray for them, they are very faithful, reading the Scriptures daily and very much all and solely for the Lord. The fear of the unknown is very great for them and they feel so helpless. They've been threatened with physical violence by those who wish to throw them out from where they're currently living, and it's simply traumatic for them.

WEBSITES

On another note, Carelinks now have a lot of experience making websites and we have a lot of literature about basic Bible doctrines suitable for display on websites. We'd be very happy to assist any individual or group or ecclesia interested in having their own website.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks