

## August 2011 8 baptisms in the Baltic, Turkey

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Mark 2 and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk5.mp3>

Brother Andy Taylor has just returned from a trip to mainland Europe and he shares here his experiences. The running of the **Riga Bible Centre** really is in need of regular financial support as mentioned previously, and we hope Brother Andy's report will serve to encourage you to consider that:

Initially hoping to be accompanied by one or two members of my family, I decided to make use of some of my long summer holiday from school, to drive across Europe to Latvia, from the UK Lake District, to try to give what help I could to the large and rapidly growing ecclesia in Riga. By 'coincidence' Bro Duncan had arranged to baptize two Iranians in Belgium, so after a night's camping in Gent, I was able to meet up with them and witness Hossein's baptism, the service being witnessed by one of his friends and his Turkish landlord; the latter, I found out has family in Blackpool, and friends in Dumfries so maybe he can visit us in Windermere on the way from one to the another... Already I felt God was blessing my visit. Duncan then went on to another city to baptize another Iranian, Bahman, whilst I got on the road for Riga. For those who may want to engage in a similar enterprise, I set off from Belgium at around 17:00 Tuesday and arrived in Riga at 23:30 Thursday, having had an exciting journey which should form the basis of a future school assembly! Incidentally, travelling by myself did have an advantage! I was able to sleep in the car somewhere near Magdeburg one night and between Poznan and Warsaw the second night. I was able to stay in a room at Riga Bible Centre being welcomed by Duncan and Bro Vladimir the resident chef extraordinaire. After a relatively quiet Friday, the next day I was able to visit Engure ecclesia, by the sea in Western Latvia, where many of the members have been baptized over 15 years. We enjoyed a meal together with Duncan then giving thoughts from the daily readings in Latvian, while providing some English, and a written translation were provided in Russian for a Russian brother with no hearing. We broke bread together, a common language to unite us all in our need to remember the work of our one Lord. The next day saw the frenzied activity on Sunday at the Riga Bible Centre. I got up at 0800 which I thought was a reasonable time and found that Vladimir and team had already prepared the 6kg of carrots, many onions, two massive cabbages and most of the 8kg of potatoes. I think they may have left one of the bags of potatoes to prepare so that I didn't feel left out! Again the memorial meeting was strongly directed by the chapters from the *Bible Companion*, with some of the local brethren giving short talks as well as Duncan. About 100 brothers and sisters attended on the Sunday, with about 70 at Bible class on the Monday evening. After the meal, before I knew it we were leaving for the beach for five baptisms, of SKAIDRITE, SVETLANA, ERIK, ARTUR and GUNAR.

It was a pleasure to see the joyful faces of our new brothers and sisters, none more so than that of Bro Artur the husband of Sis Ksvsha.

Photo: *Baptisms at the beach near Riga, brother Andy far left:*



*Praying after baptism; brother Charles greets sister Svetlana; group photo with Ksusha & Artur and baby Rodrigo far right*



As with many European cities there is not always a warm welcome for foreigners in Riga. People considered to be illegal immigrants are often held in harsh conditions. The detention centre has proved to be a fertile preaching ground. I was privileged to meet Bro Charles from Nigeria, where he had suffered much from militant Islam; also Bro Robert who was born in war-torn Sierra Leone, arriving in Latvia by boat via Guinea some four years ago. Neither of these brothers has the papers necessary to leave Latvia, and to a large extent rely on the support of their brothers and sisters. Again they in need of our prayers and the intervention of our Lord. Robert lives in the Carelinks housing project, and it was a joy for me to go and see it again, and benefit from the loving hospitality of the family there whose permanent home this delightful, but relatively isolated place is. Whilst there, there were the further baptisms in Riga of VIKTOR and LUCIJA, an older married couple, and TATYANA, girlfriend of brother Slavik. It's not every week there are eight baptisms in Latvia, but it indicates the great level of interest there is.

Photo: *Viktor & Lucija; Slavik & Tatyana*



I leave Latvia greatly encouraged by all the work led by Duncan and Sis Cindy, who of course are anticipating the soon arrival of their second child. This work needs a great deal of support, not least financial, but in other ways too. A warm welcome is assured for all who are willing to put their hand to the plough, whether travelling by air, sea or land. This is a place where there is great potential for further spiritual growth, as we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that all Christadelphians worldwide will bear this vital work in mind, and that we may have true unity in our one Lord.

*Bro Andy Taylor, Windermere ecclesia UK*

Brother Charles witnesses to all and sundry, taking books and leaflets away every Sunday to distribute around the city. We recently had an email from an English speaking Latvian who had been given a *Bible Basics* by Charles on the street after they struck up a conversation about how Jesus isn't part of the trinity:

“I have your book in English, I got it from a man i met on a street in Riga while ago . He was from Nigeria, we talked a lot, I agreed with him. Last week when I opened the book it got me thinking, the best part is that the "new" doctrine is also bible based, my friends are confused and my family too, we have some arguments. So for them i want to give this literature in latvian, english isn't a problem for me. I am from the largest church in Latvia. Real christian so as my family and friends. Are any of your churches or something lockated in Latvia, Riga? ... This is a hard situation for me, because my parents and pastor are against your biblical teaching, so angry on me, but I see no reason”

## **TURKEY**

We're happy to report the baptism of sister U, she has converted to Christ after lots of Bible

reading and is full of eager questions. Leaving Islam is a very brave thing to do, especially for a young Turkish woman still living with and dependent upon her Moslem family.

**With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks**