

## August 2012 Israel, Germany, Impressions of Latvia

This Sunday's *Bible Companion* readings include 1 Corinthians 7, and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/1cor7.mp3>

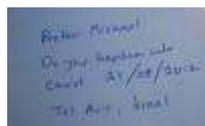
### ISRAEL

We're pleased to report a revival of response to the Gospel in this most special part of the Lord's field. It would seem that the repentance of a remnant in Israel may well be a precondition for the Lord's return, and so to have strong response from Israel is a great encouragement. Life in modern Israel is far from easy; chronic materialism, long hours of work, long journey times to work, serious traffic and personal congestion as Jews increasingly congregate in the relatively 'safe' areas of central Israel... all of themselves work against response to the Gospel. But as always, to the poor the Gospel is preached, and those on the margins of society respond.

Our work is mainly with the Russian and African communities. We met with brother Samuel, whom we baptized 3 years ago, and were delighted to find him so strong in the faith and having been clearly blessed by God in his life. His wife HELEN has been able to come and join him, and they now have a child. We were very pleased to baptize her, with great joy on her part, and then celebrate the Lord's sacrifice together. Here's brother Samuel pouring out the grape juice [not win!] for the service:



We were also pleased to baptize an African Jew, MATTHEW. We baptized him on the beach in Tel Aviv, amidst crowds of people simply enjoying themselves in the heat, without, apparently, a thought for their creator. Russians, Jews, Arabs, Europeans of all kinds, were all escaping the high temperatures in the sea, whilst we quietly baptized our new brother. In the photo you can see some conservative Arab women, wearing their headscarves, cooling off in the sea just a few meters from where we baptized our brother:



We have posted out hundreds of Russian New Testaments to Russians in Israel over the past months. Many Jewish people in the former USSR came to Israel expecting and hoping to find spirituality and true connection with God- but didn't find it. NIKOLAJ was one of them. Since retiring from Tel Aviv down to Beer Sheva, he spends his time searching for Bible truth on the internet and discussing with other Russian speakers online. After much correspondence and discussion, our brother was fully convicted of the Truth and we were pleased to baptize him in the River Jordan:



We met several other interesting contacts. For every person baptized, there are always many others we don't write about who remain on the edge of that great decision for Christ and His

Kingdom. Shimeon is one of them. Please pray for him. Like many Eastern European Jews, he has had a remarkable life. His father was Jewish and his mother Russian; he was the second of five children. They lived in a village in Western Ukraine. When the second world war broke out, his father joined the Ukrainian division of the German army, thinking this would preserve his children from persecution and death. Shimeon explained how the Germans came to each village in their district, rounded up the Jews, and shot them. The neighbours told the German soldiers about their Jewish father, and so they came into the home and took the children away, leaving the hysterical mother behind. On the way to the village square where the Jews were to be gathered before being taken away to death, Shimeon's older sister offered her body to the soldiers and started making a distraction by shouting and stripping. "I'm doing this for you, run, Shimeon, run" were her last words to him. Shimeon broke rank during the disturbance and managed to run away. He walked to his grandmother's village and hid there. He never saw his siblings again. His father survived the war, and returned home in 1945. He became an alcoholic, and Shimeon's mother separated from him and went to live in Uzbekistan, which was then part of the USSR. Shimeon says that although "Jew" was stamped in his Soviet ID papers, he never suffered serious discrimination. But he felt something was seriously missing in his life, and he feared it was "Jesus Christ". He emigrated to Israel as soon as restrictions on emigration from the USSR were lifted, but he didn't find the synagogues to give him the answers he was searching for. He then encountered us on the internet, studied Bible Basics, and feels the need to be baptized. But... something holds him back. We do not know the hearts of men, but in advanced years and poor health, he says he strongly realizes he needs to become "in Christ". It's futile to speculate his reasons for delay, all we can do is pray for him and many others like him, who have surely been led to the Truth of Christ but still need to commit themselves. Here's a photo to help focus your thoughts and prayers:

### **GERMANY**

Our very active brother Sajad reports the baptism of HASSAN, an Afghan contact in Magdeburg; and he continues to zealously spread the Gospel in Arabic and Farsi to the large communities of these speakers in Germany.

### **IMPRESSIONS OF LATVIA**

Another visit to Riga and great to see the mum's group there still growing with lovely mums and the occasional dad. Most speak English as well as Latvian and we shared a very enjoyable outing to the sand sculptures in Riga finally getting there by 2 trolleybuses and a hike with babies and toddlers after the bus Cindy booked didn't arrive (not unusual here). We were impressed by the patience of this group and the way they look after each other. The play area at the hall has been transformed since our last visit by a kids cubby, a ball pit and lots of toys which are also lent out, as they form a "toy library". This indoor play area is a real drawcard in winter when there are so few places to take children.



We had the pleasure of meeting ILZE – (a young lady Cindy has been writing to) and attending her baptism in a small country town in Western Latvia. Her mum had a *Bible Basics* book but hadn't read it. Ilze read it and posted back the answers to all the questions. But it was a very old edition and the address in the book was wrong, so her package of answers was returned to her. Determined not to give up Ilze went to the library and found the *Bible Basics* website and got the

new address and posted all her answers in... things went from there. She is a lovely young woman and brought us a plate of sandwiches and cake to celebrate her new birth. She'll be able to catch a bus and visit a home meeting in a nearby town. She has a young daughter too.



*Robin & Steve Jones*

We're also pleased to report the baptisms in Riga of PASHA, VIKA and JOLANTA. Here's brother Pasha being welcomed after baptism; and sister Jolanta [in apron] distributing food at one of the feeding programs in the hall:



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