

Brothers Ali, Boris etc. November 2009

SPECIAL REMINDER: Australian Carelinks Conference will be held on December 12, God willing, at the Hurstville Hall. There's a stimulating line up of presentations- more details at <http://carelinks.net/doc/events>

Carelinks are truly delighted to report that several projects of care, of 'linking' and of preaching the Gospel have born the fruit recently.

BROTHER ALI

We're delighted to announce the arrival of our dear brother Ali, finally, in the USA. After studying Bible Basics, Ali came to Turkey some years ago, and was baptized at the Carelinks safe house there. He returned to Iran where he continued preaching, but encountered significant persecution. After some time he fled for his life to Turkey, where he has been living in great difficulties in various locations for three years whilst we have assisted him make his case with the UNHCR. We're very grateful to the small ecclesia who so faithfully supported him financially during that time. He worked as much as he could, washing dishes and other such jobs, even though refugees aren't allowed to work and are often not paid, and lived at times in very difficult situations. Through all this Ali continued sharing the Gospel, and at least three people were baptized as a result of his work. Whenever we met him, it was clear [despite the language barrier] that he was in love with the Lord and His Truth. He had a handwritten translation of the Bible companion in Farsi and clearly read each day. Several times he came in from the mountainous area where he was to the safe house for fellowship and breaking of bread with other brethren.

Now, he's safe from Islamic persecution. But not safe from temptation, as he embarks upon the life of temptation and spiritual obstacles which he now encounters in the USA. Brother Charlie Klennert, not sparing his blushes, has opened his home and heart to Ali and welcomed him to live with him; he's now a member of the Tacoma ecclesia, and served the emblems last Sunday at the ecclesia. From Ali and from all of us, thank you all so much for your prayerful support. There are of course many other brethren in various stages of the UNHCR process, and we continue trying to assist as best we can.

Photos: Brother Charlie meeting Brother Ali at the airport, Ali with his two bags containing all he has

RIGA BIBLE CENTRE

Meanwhile, the amazing growth of the Gospel continues in Riga. This last week we baptized AGRIS, ANITA and VALERIJ into the Lord's saving Name. Valerij has attended our meetings on and off for a while; first time he came, he said he didn't need a Bible as he had no glasses. Having set him up with both a Bible and reading glasses, he read not only the Bible but also Bible Basics. He walks with some difficulty but gets very little support from the state.

Photo: *Brother Valerij at the Riga Bible Centre*



WINTER WELFARE: BROTHER BORIS

We continue distributing Winter Welfare support in Eastern Europe. Whilst Russia has huge resources, there's a major division between the haves and the have nots, as in many countries these days. We've spoken about brother Boris before- baptized in 2003, the Truth is his life, and the hope of the Kingdom what keeps Him going. He's very ill with advanced heart failure. He has no relatives apart from his elderly sister in a village far away, and as he's scarcely mobile he has nobody to care for him, his nightmare was that he would die and be 'buried' the way many such elderly people are- body put in a sack and left in the big garbage cans which are outside each apartment block. We assisted our brother to move to the town of brother Oleg, who has made it his life's mission at the moment to take care of Boris until he falls asleep. Oleg even took Boris on the massive journey to the Bible School last year, walking a few steps at a time. An abiding memory of the Eastern European Bible Schools has been to see Oleg taking care of Boris. But now Boris can't even get out of his apartment, he's not been out of it for three months. Oleg and another sister in the town, Valya, care for Boris and see him every day. The three of them meet every Sunday in Boris's room to break bread. For the last while, an elderly woman ALEVTINA has been meeting with them, and she took the great decision to be baptized after much careful study of our literature. Boris feels he will soon fall asleep and the doctors say the same, and he asked Brother Duncan to come and see him before he dies rather than for the funeral. He has instructed us to make no fuss about his falling asleep but to get on with the work of the Gospel. So the trip was made, and it was a good opportunity to distribute Winter welfare in this part of Russia, and also to baptize sister Alevtina.

Brother Oleg's devotion to the Lord is an example to us all. Baptized in 2001, he has devoted himself to the Lord. He's single, 55 years old, and works in a factory from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. All his spare time is devoted to the study of the Bible, caring for Boris and trying to interest people in the Gospel. He lives in a tiny room, on the one bookcase is his prized possession- a model of the tabernacle. He was enthused about the tabernacle and the types and shadows of the Law after hearing Brother Scott Ketelsen speak about it at a Winter Bible School.

Photo: *Br. Oleg and his tabernacle model*



The colossal work that's gone into translating and printing books about the Truth in Russian hasn't been wasted with brethren like Oleg- he has read and re-read most of them, making copious notes.

Photo: *Here's a page from one of our books Oleg's read three times:*



On the way home from work, Oleg does shopping for Boris, makes sure he's OK, and then comes home to sit at his desk and get on with his Bible study. That's his life, with Bible School the highlight of the year.

Photo: *Oleg's Bible study desk*



The breaking of bread meeting with Brother Boris was inevitably emotional, but one feels our work has been done when one hears a former atheist just full of the things of God and His coming Kingdom. Hardly able to stand up, our brother made a special effort to arise and greet our new sister Alevtina. We gave him one of the welfare packages we requested in a previous Carelink. Boris was appreciative, but says the best thing we gave him was the Truth, and the large print Russian Bible- readers may recall Carelinks made an appeal to obtain stocks of these a few years ago. Boris is frequently dizzy, but reads the chapters from the Bible Companion 10 verses at a time and then takes a break. He has a large print copy of the Bible Companion attached to the CAT / Carelinks Bible Reader's Calendar. When he manages to complete the Bible readings for the day, he writes a 'V' on the day- V for victory. And he has his own extra symbols for whether he managed to read the chapters on the specific day, or had to catch up the next day. He feels that to pray for us, and for the African brethren in the photo for the month, and to do his Bible readings, is all he can do now. It's all been worth it for Boris, as it has been for so many others as they come to take their turn in falling asleep in Christ in sure hope of the Kingdom- "that blessed hope", as Boris likes to say. We reflected on the words of the hymn: "God be in my heart, and in my thinking; God be at my end, and at my departing". Truly "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. 23:10).

Here are some pictures illustrating these things, and Boris passing on the wine at the breaking of bread with a devout reverence.



Sister Alevtina is likewise full of the hope of the Kingdom and the Bible. She learnt the Gospel from truly good and faithful men in Christ. She has lost sight in one eye as on her tiny pension she can't afford the cataract operation, and now she has problems in her other eye. If she needs the operation we'll make an appeal for this. Meanwhile, do share her joy and pray for her and this little ecclesia of 4 faithful members.

Photo: *Sis Aleftina reading her Bible with difficulty; and brother Boris standing to greet her after baptism*



Photo: *The final parting [perhaps] this side of the Kingdom; but with joy in “that blessed hope”.*



HAITI

In our last **Carelinks**, we spoke of the baptism of the first ecclesia in Haiti, after they came to the firm conclusion that the Trinity is wrong. Our new brethren are actively proclaiming the real, non-trinitarian Christ to the people around them; brother **Esmath** writes:

“Without beating around the bush my dear brother, the Lord is at work and other people are added daily because they are enjoying the real Gospel that I am preaching. The most serious thing is going to be happened this Sunday Morning around 7:00 to 10:00 . I will have problem to accommodate them because the local is small and we do not have enough chairs either but I am pretty sure that most of the population are going to be remaining standing during the whole service. Please Bro! Keep on praying for that ministry, so that God can open all the doors. I cannot end without thanking you for your prompt action regarding the documents, I received them yesterday. I am going to set apart a special time in my schedule to read the books”.

With love and gratitude from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks