

December 2008 Russia

The Gospel continues to spread in Russia- we receive several requests per day for literature in Russia from all over this vast country. A team of brothers and sisters in Latvia mail out the requests, and we get into a lot of correspondence, with assistance from our brothers and sisters in Russia. All from Moscow area are invited to meet with the Moscow ecclesia, and likewise in other areas. After a lot of emailing, we were delighted to visit JULIJA in a small town in central Russia and baptize her into the Lord. She has been spending about 8 hours / day online for some time [working 8 hours and sleeping 8 hours], in a desperate search for the Truth. She's struggled her way through every doctrinal area to the Truth, and really it was such a joy to be with her and baptize her.

She doesn't know English but translates things using Google translate. She's already taken on the job of writing to all who request literature from us, with her personal testimony and encouraging them to read *Bible Basics* as she did. Here's a translation of her testimony- truly our labour is not in vain, in the Lord:

"Hello, my name is Julija. I am a believer from Voronezhslaya Oblast. I'm 28 years old, recently on 6 December I was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and finally found peace with God. I searched a long time for the Truth, I went to the Russian Orthodox church, Pentecostals, evangelicals. I read so much Adventist literature on the internet. Despite reading so much, I still couldn't see a clear picture of the Gospel. Every church had its own understanding of God's word. With time, and much Bible reading, I came to doubt the general Christian understanding of God as a Trinity, and also their view of us having an immortal soul. I began to think I was a heretic. But then I came upon the site of the Brothers in Christ at <http://www.biblebasicsonline.com> and <http://www.hristadelfiane.org> . I studied *Bible Basics*. I then saw the full clear picture of the Gospel, the truth about God and Jesus, and the way to salvation. And now I wish that as many as people as possible would come to know the Truth about God, about Christ, about what satan really is; to understand what is the true Gospel and finally to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. So I am recommending everyone to study *Bible Basics* and truly to find the joy and peace of true Christianity".

Photo: Julija just before her baptism



We went on to visit Sister Raisa, whose home had been seriously flooded. All up, 10 members of her family have been baptized, and 4 of them live near to her and have been able to at least clean the place out and put linoleum down so she can be there again. She lives in a tumbledown home in a valley, which is very muddy and wet at the best of times:



A flash flood enveloped the valley area, and Raisa explained how in the middle of the night, she and her granddaughter in law [sister Irina] and her young baby [Raisa's great grandson] were

sleeping when in the middle of the night, Raisa noticed water coming into the house, seeping through the front door and windows. She went to the door and opened it, and the water surged in, rising to over a metre in some places- just below the power socket in the photo. Raisa describes with zest how the cot and furniture started floating, the refrigerator fell over, her Gospel News magazines got soaked, and how she and Irina stood up to their chests in dirty water for an hour and half, holding the baby and telephone above the water. They called Raisa's daughter and called for help, but nobody came as the valley was inaccessible and the emergency services had no boats. Eventually the family got to them and pulled them out. Raisa was 10 days in hospital but she's 'a tough old stick' and is now bounced right back to good health despite being in her 70s.



As a result of the flood, the house has sunk significantly at one end, which has wrecked the windows and roof / ceiling, as you can see from the photos:



With help from the brotherhood and their own labour, brothers Karin and Valentin have done a marvellous job getting gravel delivered, cleaning the house out, but it's really unsaveable and they've started building a new outhouse for our sister- they've done the foundation and got the wood and are ready to build the walls:



We had a very encouraging breaking of bread together with the family in their apartment- it's just wonderful to see those baptized some years ago now continuing faithfully in the daily Bible readings and weekly breaking of bread, quite a testimony to our dear sister Raisa, a true mother in Israel.



We went on to Kazan, where there are about 50 brothers and sisters in the area. Again it was a pleasure to see how the habit of daily Bible reading using the Companion plan has become the

staple spiritual food of the groups which have developed, largely due to the colossal work of our dear brother Alexei Hodusov, who was baptized back in 1993. We were able to distribute assistance to his groups, but were struck by the need for reading glasses and more large print Russian Bibles. Dear brother Sasha and his sister Valya take it in turn to use the reading glasses they have, and we shot a video of them doing the Bible readings together using this method- see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZr7sssa97o> . The ecclesia sing an unaccompanied hymn between each of the 3 portions of the daily Bible readings.

Here are a few stills from this short movie:



If anyone can order some large print Russian Bibles for them on the net, we'll happily let you know their mailing address. These dear brothers and sisters are the salt of the earth.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks