

December 2016 Austria, Latvia, Winter Welfare

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 1 and 2 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/mt1and2.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and Bible Companion bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

AUSTRIA

We made a visit this week to a refugee camp with over 200 people in it. We met and baptized SAED, who was first brought into contact with us by a brother already baptized. He was truly so very grateful for his baptism. Our conversation was greatly assisted by the translation services of another man, an older gentleman who had such an amazing life story that it kind of had the right of truth to it. The whole camp was such a great opportunity for witness; in addition to those from Syria and the Middle East, there were all kinds of interesting, non-standard folks there from all over the world. With regular visits and teaching, surely many would turn to the Lord. We talked with many of them, leaving *Bible Basics* in their languages. They are all the promising "type", who are searching for God and for meaning, after passing through years of trauma and repression. We really urge you to find your local refugee centers and just go there and witness. This is a wonderful way to take the Gospel to literally all nations.



LATVIA

We've been pleased to have brother Jesse Andrews with us working in the kitchen, from Ontario, Canada; Jim and Anne have been explaining to him the procedures:



He reports:

"It's hard to put into words the need of the people who come for a cup of coffee and a bowl of soup daily at the *Riga Bible Center*. The area allows for the reception of a large population - being in proximity to innumerable soviet-era-style apartment buildings. What is there to say about the great work that's being done here? Volunteers from the west come and stay for extended periods to support the efforts of Duncan Heaster; the former preparing nutritious soups packed full of ingredients like chicken, corn, tomato paste, potatoes, carrots, etc. while the latter delivers an exhortation in Russian to the people who come by.

Initially, I was told, the people who came for a cup of coffee or tea before the exhortation and meal came in to sit in silence. Now, us soup-chefs can hear the din of excited, if excitable, Russian chatter pouring through the closed door. The set-up and take-down of the whole operation outside the kitchen is particularly impressive. Though we take care of three water boilers for coffee or tea, the stools (visitors sit on stools around 3 tables) are set up by local

volunteers and are wiped down, floor mopped, and washrooms wiped down vigorously also by those local volunteers who are 'paid' with a bit of extra food. They also set up the rows of chairs that they'll use to sit and listen to Duncan deliver his nightly exhortation which takes place between coffee/tea and the soup meal.

To speak highly of the other soup-chefs here, the process in the kitchen is also impressive to someone witnessing it for the first time. Within the span of about 4 hours, the entire kitchen area is sanitized and wiped down before being assaulted by a flurry of cutting boards, knives, meat grinders, and trays, all to cut, chop, mince, pour, and sanitize whatever dishes the cooks use, followed by a daily mop and sweep and then a final sanitization in the evening. All told, after a few hours of hard work, three steaming pots of soup roll out of the kitchen on a sanitized trolley nightly to the appreciation of all the visitors to the *Riga Bible Center*".

We were pleased to witness the baptism of VIKTOR. He will not live in the night shelters, but just sleeps where he can. He was an air force pilot, serving in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation there. He speaks well, and isn't alcoholic. He is aware that he has post traumatic stress issues, and chooses to manage them by living alone. He has become very interested in connection with the God who he knows protected and preserved him throughout the traumas of the war. He was truly delighted to be baptized. He had been decorated with the Order of the Red Star, one of the highest Soviet military awards. He realizes now that all human glory and achievement is nothing compared to our need for the Lord Jesus.

Truly it was an honour to baptize him; and to give him clean clothes to wear.



Attendance has been good, with over 110 in the hall one night.

WINTER WELFARE

We've continued providing firewood and also candles to those in desperate straits. We earlier mentioned the plight of those who can't stay in the night shelters all year round, and must spend part of the Winter fending for themselves. One elderly sister has been living in an awful hovel, up a very steep flight of steps- with no electricity, water or toilet. Last week there was a stench of rotting flesh coming from one of the rooms off the landing, seems there was a decaying corpse there. This has now been shifted, but words cannot describe the utter hovel and abject poverty this sister lives in. Young Daniel was touched to hear of her plight and wanted to come on the next visit, to take her candles and light them for her. This he did, and we also took Winter warmer presents there. Jim made a video of the scene, and despite low light problems, he has captured quite a bit of the atmosphere. They were using our firewood to heat some water on an open fire; the room was very smokey and they were all coughing. It would have been pitch black were it not for the candles provided. Each time we visit, we pray with them, for blessing and strength in their awful situation. On the video you can hear the prayer, said in Russian and English, and pray along with us. It's incredible that such abject poverty can exist within the European Union;

so do have a look at the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpT11wlsqd0>

You can see Daniel with his candles, Jesse and Cardia with firewood; and sister Tanya on the far right with her candle:



Cindy's Winter warmer scene will be going into operation this week, and you can still donate towards it.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For those recently baptized
- For the likes of sister Tanya this Winter
- For all our refugee brethren who are spending their first festive season away from family and native environment

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks