

February 2012 Feeding Program, Belgium

This Sunday's *Bible Companion* readings include Mark 1, and there's an MP3 on this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mk1.mp3>

BELGIUM

The spread of the Truth amongst the network of Iranian brethren throughout Western Europe is an amazing if largely unrecognized phenomena, and an amazing evidence that God is indeed active today amongst those often rejected and marginalized by Western society. Another brief visit was paid to the ecclesia at Antwerp, and we're pleased to report the baptism of brother A. Iranian brethren from elsewhere in Belgium travelled to be with us for this happy event and to strengthen our new brother.

FEEDING PROGRAM

Thanks to your support, the feeding program was able to go ahead along with much other work recently. Following is a report from sister Rachel Harrington of the Folkestone, UK ecclesia:

Dear Readers

This week's Carelink is coming to you from the back seat of a car! Br Michael Boler is currently driving myself (Rachel Harrington) and Duncan to the back of beyond... Duncan has been grabbing 40 winks as he had only a few hours earlier returned from Belgium. Sis Vanessa Boler is back at base camp (Riga ecclesial hall) and finding many useful things to do! (clearing and sorting). We are going to a funeral service in a small town in Eastern Latvia for a sister called Nina who died earlier this week. It was one of her last requests that Duncan should bury her [made only a few weeks ago, when Br Charles Abel and the Bartons visited her- as if she had a strange premonition that her instant death from a heart attack was imminent]. By all accounts her faith was strong and she was very contented with her lot even though she had a hard life as a subsistence farmer in this cruelly cold climate [she was featured on Carelinks reports several times, and the Bartons recently gave her much help and encouragement].



Photo: Laying our beloved sister Nina to rest

However, this is our 8th day here so I need to back track a week and tell you what we have been up to!

Duncan met us from Riga Airport and so began our learning curve to a completely different way of life. Our first task was to get firewood for a particularly needy group of four (2 brothers, one sister and a very interested friend). We were later taken to the hall, which was to be our home for the next 10 days. It has been warm and comfortable and provided us with all our needs. Outside the weather is -20 or below. Saturday was a day of happenings, we delivered the wood as previously mentioned to a small apartment, and took some emergency provisions to a young married brother and sister living temporarily with a friend. This couple are in dire need. We also had to do much supermarket shopping, and to make life more complicated the car key decided it would snap off in the ignition. The day was interspersed with many prayers and this in itself was comforting.



Photo: Mike, Rachel and Vanessa delivering food and firewood in the brutally low temperatures to Slavik & Tanya

Sunday was a busy day, all brothers and sisters and interested friends arrive at 11 for coffee and chess. At 12 it is Bible class based on the first two readings, with Duncan explaining or expounding verse by verse, with a bit of English thrown in for us. Another break for coffee, and then on to the Breaking of bread using the New Testament reading. At about 2.30 a hot stew is served. The hall is full of about 80-100 people and all the food goes quickly with any seconds being eagerly received. A similar procedure is followed on a Monday except it is about 5.30 the meal is served. Many members travel huge distances often on foot to receive both the spiritual and physical sustenance. The 3 of us were shown by bro Vlad what to cook and how to cook it...and because of having more 'boots on the ground' Duncan thought he would roll out the feeding programme to cover Tues-Friday as well! It was difficult to know how many would come but it ended up being about 60ish every day. The queue for the food contained many hungry looking faces with different sets of experiences... we definitely felt we were casting our net wide and God was giving an increase. Much of our week was taken up with the provision of physical food, buying, cooking, clearing up, washing-up but not ALL!



Photo: The team cooking and feeding; the special treat was pancakes with jam, and there was nearly another Russian Revolution when they were distributed

We had two baptisms at the hall this week! The first was a young man called NAURIS who had initially come across one of Duncan's articles on the internet about Satan, he had been reading his Bible in earnest for the last 4 years and travelling around the world searching for 'the truth'. Once he started reading Duncan's article on the Devil, he couldn't stop! All he read in the various books and courses all made sense or fitted in with his own understanding of Bible truth and he had a desire to be baptised; he prayed to God and asked that if it was his will to be baptised that He would lead him in the right direction; within a few days he found himself travelling back from India and arranging a meeting with Duncan. The amazing thing is that Nauris is Latvian! Another great timing was that we all conversed in English as his language skills were excellent and that his baptism was on the Wednesday morning when Cindy holds her mother and toddler group. One of Cindy's ladies is herself expressing an interest and it was a great witness for the mothers and toddlers to gather round his confession of faith and watch as he died to his old life and rose to his new. Later Vanessa, Michael and myself held a breaking of bread with our new brother in Christ.



Photo: Nauris discussing Scripture with the group; smiles all round at the outreach to mums and toddlers; mums and toddlers who came in off the street observing the baptism

The next afternoon we witnessed the Baptism of a friend of another brother and sister called Sandra and Andrej. The young man's name was MARIS. The three of them are living in make shift accommodation (someone's garage). It was very moving to watch other brethren and sisters adding words of encouragement and personal testament to Duncan's baptismal address, which even though we didn't understand, was either interpreted or conveyed by body and sign language.

I'm only supposed to write a paragraph or two! But we have just had a couple more prayers as in the middle of this journey and my blogging the oil light has come on and the car is smelling dodgy. With God's help an auto centre almost seems to appear out of the snow, and the man comes out with his diagnosis even though he's closed today. We are moving again.

I'm nearing the end but would like to go over our role here...we all felt the 'feeding project' had gone better than expected and was an excellent way of mixing the spread of Bible truth with real practical need. Those of you who know me know I'm not a cook so don't be scared to volunteer some of your time, a week or so would be great. If you are restricted with your time, money would be greatly appreciated; there are so many small but life changing requirements that can be met. For some of the brethren and sisters here they are already too sick to have much life left, but donations can at least mean that their last days have some relief; they can hold fast to the end; and be brought to God's kingdom with dignity.

Yours in Christ

Rachel, Vanessa, Michael

The serious implications for the poor and elderly of the "cold snap" in Eastern Europe are probably known to many readers from the various News reports. We are sorry to report that the body of brother Georgij in the Krasnodar region of southern Russia was found in the snow of his village; we give thanks to the Lord for his life and for his response to the great Hope of the Kingdom which he seized with both hands.

CARELINKS CONFERENCE

You can meet Mike & Vanessa & Rachel in person at the Carelinks UK Conference on February 25th, God willing- more details at <http://carelinks.net/doc/events>

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks