

February 2014 Russia, Winter Welfare, Riga, Syria, Ukraine

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Romans 12 and there is an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/rom12.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files

at <http://aletheiacollege.net/archives.html> ; *Carelinks Bible Radio* is at <http://r-b-c.org/listen.php> ; and God willing, we have our live video link service in English this Sunday at

08:00 a.m. GMT - you can view direct at www.carelinks.net [scroll down to the video screen] or if you want to make comments and participate in live chat,

use <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/biblecenter> . You can view recordings of previous sessions at www.youtube.com/CarelinksMinistries

SYRIA

We're pleased to tell you that the funds donated for the welfare of seriously suffering families of our brethren in Syria have been received and used for that purpose. The situation continues to be hopeless there with the majority of the remaining population in need of basic food and shelter.

UKRAINE

There are well over 200 brethren and sisters in Ukraine and we need to pray for the situation there to resolve in a way which enables them to continue to live God's Truth in peace. With civil administration now at a standstill in much of the country, this already is creating all manner of practical problems for our brethren and sisters.

WINTER WELFARE

We continue providing Winter welfare support in various ways, especially seeking to help brothers and sisters to avoid falling into debt for heating payments which will lead to them losing their apartments and falling into the night shelter situation. Sisters Lorraine Eichhorn and Hazel Rutherford of the Nantwich UK ecclesia have been in Latvia along with brother Peter Eichhorn and brother Denis Leverett of the Chelmsford UK ecclesia.

Here's their report on some Winter welfare work done in Riga:

*"It has been -15 degrees by day and down to -25 by night in **Riga** (the capital of **Latvia**) since we arrived on Saturday. Try to imagine the living conditions of three members of the ecclesia and a non-member who is looking to be baptised but ashamed to expose his long unwashed body. Two have TB and one is HIV positive which prevents them from getting beds in night shelters due to their having communicable disease. We visited them last night, travelling in a warm car the journey that they make on foot or taking illegal bus rides in sub-zero temperatures. Their ' home ' is a stair-well, on a concrete floor, in a cavernous derelict building. The wind whistles through its broken entrance. No furniture only concrete stairs to sit on and an assortment of thin pieces of bedding to lie on. Two candles light their nights. No heating, no wash facilities, no hot food at all. Their only facilities are in a nearby supermarket where they can use the toilets and wash during opening hours. These are some of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ who walk these long distances in sub-zero temperatures to receive the bowls of soup prepared daily at the hall. The reality of handing out these bowls to the 100+ every day hit me forcibly after our evening visit. The huge disparity between their lives now in Christ and mine.... We stay here in a well heated , modern house, sleeping in warm beds and with access to every modern facility. At home we have houses, pensions, savings and government support systems. They have nothing due to their situation as ethnic Russians. We bought them some food, water to use immediately before it froze, gave them some sleeping bags, gloves, hats and the scarves that we were wearing. More*

will be provided as needed. Today I will understand why they return for 2nd, 3rd and more helpings of soup and bread until the pans run dry. If reading this sounds like drama, it is not. It is cold hard reality for some. And I will pray that my Brothers and Sisters in the West will support this valuable work with more love, understanding and aid and pray for more workers to come over and help those who already work out here".

Here are some photos of the dark building where our brethren are living, they don't do justice to the cold and starkness of the building. In the first photo you can see the bed they are sleeping on, thin blankets on the floor- and then our visiting team providing warmer sleeping bags:



Our team also did a firewood distribution to a sister living in a room which would be typical of the housing for most of our brethren and sisters who aren't in night shelters. Electricity has been cut off and there's a large debt, the only light is from a candle, which you can see burning next to some outdated cancer medication:



Here's Hazel and Lorraine carrying firewood up the steep wooden stairs to the room:



And here are our same two sisters dishing out the food they prepared, realizing even moreso the need we are meeting:



Please do continue supporting the work we are engaged in, and consider again how the need is the call- there really is a need for someone or a couple to come and be based in Riga on a longer term basis or at least for 3 months at a time.

RUSSIA

We continue receiving requests from all over the vastness of Russia for Bibles and *Bible Basics*, which thanks to your generosity we are able to respond to. This is resulting in many people engaging with God's word for the first time, and many others coming out of the darkness of wrong understandings to the light of the real Christ. We're delighted to report the baptisms of YURI and VLADIMIR. Vladimir was yet another Jehovah's Witness who first came to us from watching our videos aimed at former JW's. After 7 years with the organization, he broke free and is simply so glad to be baptized into Christ rather than into the Watchtower. His wife is an active JW and left the apartment in disgust whilst we conducted the baptism in the bath tub. Our new

brother faces a humanly impossible marital position now and so please do pray for him:



RIGA

In the last week we've been blessed with four baptisms in Riga, brothers VITALY, MIKHAIL [husband of sis. Nellija], ALEXEI and SERGEJ. Here you can see sister Sandra greeting brother Alexei and presenting him with an *NEV Bible*, urging him to not only read daily from the Bible Companion but to open the Bible regularly during the course of each day for guidance. Mel & Andy Downton are onlooking:



Here's a group photo after one of the baptism sessions, with the visiting team of the Bolers, Downtons, Eichhorns, Dennis Leverett and Hazel Rutherford:



With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks