

February 2014 Ukraine, Riga, Japan, Greece

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include 1 Corinthians 6 and there is an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/1cor6.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

UKRAINE

The dramatic events in Ukraine over the last week have left over 1000 wounded and scores dead, but none of our brothers and sisters are amongst them. However, everyone in the country is deeply affected, with banks frozen, transport and some border crossings currently in the hands of the rebels, and local authorities in several areas hijacked by rebels and not functioning. Let's pray for all our brothers and sisters and their families there, and for an environment there in which the Lord's people may be able to serve Him in peace.

There is some Biblical evidence worth considering that Ukraine has a role to play in Biblical prophecies of the last day. We have produced a PDF concerning this which you are welcome to download from www.carelinks.net/docs/Ukraine.pdf

RIGA

We've had sisters Anna and Barbara Ryder in Riga this week, helping with the feeding programme, pastoral work and Anna helping with the music which is now a daily feature at the Bible class and feeding scheme which is still being conducted five days / week. You can see a brief movie clip of Anna and Mel singing phonetically in Latvian at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob3gghdXdd0> . Anna & Barbara were a great help and their report follows. We now look forward to Bro. Russell & Sis. Dawn Skinner from the Horley UK ecclesia coming over this week to continue the work. Please do pray and consider the need for longer term visitors to come over from the end of March, God willing, to continue the amazing momentum built up.

*"Well it's been an action-packed week so far at the **Riga** winter feeding programme and it's been an absolute privilege to be involved. Each morning back at the house, it has been a hive of activity as presentations have been finalised, shopping lists compiled and Russian songs practised in preparation for the afternoon's activities. We're not sure what we'd do without Google Translate, when it comes to translating talks and working out how to pronounce song lyrics! Mike, Vanessa, Andy and Mel have been out here for over 7 weeks now and have got the running of the feeding programme down to a very fine art, including the training of volunteer helpers in the exacting health and safety procedures required for food preparation in public venues. The meals prepared for the guests are of outstanding quality and judging by all the smiles and exclamations of 'ochen kharasho'(very good!) and 'very wonderful', it's well-received. The menu this week has been carefully and lovingly prepared by Vanessa and has included things like sausage casserole and pork and apply stew. It's wonderful that we are able to demonstrate the exuberant love of Jesus to these people by treating them with such grace and dignity even though many of them can be seen as outcasts by society.*

Photo: Anna and Barbara preparing and serving food



One of the biggest differences we've noticed since we last came over a year ago is the way the guests, many of whom are now members of the Riga meeting have got to know each other and are much more at ease with one another. Doors open at 4pm and they come in and chat and drink coffee for an hour, before Mel and Andy – joined this week by Anna – lead a session of worship and Bible reflections. To break the ice they start with some vocal warm ups, often including some amusing actions or sound effects, then Mel leads a time of worship. We had never heard them sing before, so this has been a real delight to hear. Some of them really enter into the spirit of the songs and sing with great gusto, others enjoy playing along on percussion instruments and the smiles breaking out on their weather-beaten, world-weary faces is very moving. Andy has been doing some great talks this week – ably aided by Tanya, a homeless sister, who reads out his Russian transcript – and adlibs when Google Translate got it a bit wrong!! His visual aids, such as the dry cup-a-soup went down very well and helped remind us all that we need God's Spirit (the water) to help us understand the message of the Bible, otherwise it's just dry words on a page.

The language barrier is always an issue, though Mel wins first prize for most effort at learning Russian. She has been using an excellent free online programme called 'Memrise' and has learnt lots of basic phrases and has mastered the Russian alphabet, which is very handy when it comes to reading the song lyrics and teaching the songs. For us lesser mortals, just knowing a few basic words like 'you're welcome', 'thank you' and 'God bless' is a great way of breaking the ice and connecting with the locals! Members are really beginning to look out for each other; we've noticed people fetching cups of water for others when they're coughing, bringing chairs for people, helping one another carry their plates of food if they're struggling. Several stay around at the end of each day to help clear up and one brother always vacs the room for us, which is no mean feat as it's a huge floor! We're also seeing members taking more ownership of the services. One brother, Nicolai, who broke his leg last week excitedly gave a testimony yesterday about how God had healed his leg over night. It was also lovely to see another man come and ask us to pray for his marriage to be restored and for him to overcome his alcohol addiction. God is really becoming an active part of people's lives, not just an academic exercise. This is so much more than a 'winter feeding programme'. It's an example of true fellowship where friendships are being deepened, God is being worshipped and proclaimed and people are serving one another in many different ways. "

Many of our brothers and sisters live in the very spartan night shelters, allowed in only at 8 p.m. and they must be out by 8 a.m., and not allowed to store anything there. It's a hard ending to life for some who worked for decades in the same factory. Here's the notice on the door of one of the better shelters, which allows people in from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m.- but with a clearly underlined notice that the shelter does not work in the day time:



Please continue praying for the work here and consider whether you or anyone you know could come over after the end of March, God willing.

CARELINKS CONFERENCES

The *UK Conference* is planned in Croydon, Surrey for March 29th, God willing; and the *USA Conference* will be a long weekend gathering at the South Ozone Park, New York ecclesia Friday 18 - Sunday 20 July 2014, God willing. More details at www.carelinks.net/doc/events

GREECE

Greece is a particularly unpleasant place for asylum seekers, and we're sorry to tell you of the imprisonment of our Iranian brother Simon, please pray for him. We have spoken to him in prison; he's in a cell with 12 others and no exercise. Only one other man in the cell is Christian and they have put the 10 commandments up on the wall which is the least he can do to witness.

JAPAN

We've received a lovely letter of appreciation from our sister Danielle in prison in Japan. She is really so thankful for all the literature and letters she is sent. The prison rules are very legalistic and forbid our sister to give her literature to another prisoner, but she has a French speaking cell mate who is interested and with whom she works long hours each day in the prison factory. Please pray for our sister in these very tight conditions and for her witness:



With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks