

January 2012 Winter Bible School and Welfare, China

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 24, and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt24.mp3>

WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL

We're sorry to say goodbye to our dear Br Warren & Sis Jeannie Barton, who have worked so hard in caring for so many over the last several weeks in Eastern Europe. They have taken special care of our sister Nina, and here she is breaking out into a spontaneous prayer of thanks, as her manner is, as Jeannie and her family say goodbye to her for the moment:



And here's Rowan and Warren Barton delivering potatoes and carrots to our sister to enable her to survive the Winter. As a subsistence farmer, she has only her few potatoes and root crops from last year's harvest to survive on until the next growing season. At her advanced age she can't grow nor harvest so much, and Colorado beetles have struck her potatoes. So she was rationing herself a few potatoes per daily. Her huge generosity to visitors, lading them with various home made food and jam, is the more touching when you appreciate that the food she has in her storeroom is all she has to live on until next harvest:



Again and again, we and many of our brethren and sisters in Eastern Europe would like to express their thanks to the Barton family for their great labour of love.

Warren and Jeannie went on to the **Winter Bible School** in Ukraine, where Warren gave talks about the seven signs in John's Gospel. Other speakers included br Alan Atkin from England, who was present along with his Ukrainian wife sister Larisa; and brother Steve Kenney from Australia:



Including day visitors, about 70 brethren and sisters were present- some of whom have been attending such gatherings for over 15 years. As we always read the same chapters from the *Bible Companion* at Bible School as it's around the same time each year, so this year we chose some other readings. The spiritual growth evident amongst this group of largely former atheists is truly amazing to behold. Our work is starting to truly come of age, as this time, we had some excellent studies from Russian speaking brethren- Nikolay, Oleg, Evgenij, Andrej and Maxim all gave excellent talks. Here are Evgenij and his son Maxim in action- a wonderful example of how the true Gospel has dramatically transformed a typical Soviet atheistic family:



Because of ever rising costs, we had to limit attendance quite strongly. For so many, this is their only chance in the year to get together with other brothers and sisters. The bond of fellowship is indeed very intense.

We were pleased to welcome some advanced contacts who were ready for baptism. We're delighted to report the baptisms and receiving into fellowship of LIDIJA from Russia, and VALYA, IGOR, VIKTOR and ALEXEI [son of sister Lena] from Ukraine.

Brothers Igor and Viktor are the fruit of our witness on the Russian speaking internet, the others are all the result of personal witness and distribution of *Bible Basics* by existing brethren and sisters.

20 years ago there were virtually no brethren and sisters in the territory of the USSR; now there have been over 2000 baptisms in that area over those years, all by God's blessing. The problem is that this is a huge area, covering much of Eurasia, and so many are in isolation. Gathering them all together isn't easy and transport costs increase in real terms each year. We and they therefore really do appreciate your support and enabling of these gatherings, as without them the community would have little sense of fellowship and interaction with each other. Our brethren and sisters are generally poor and unable to fund their own long distance travel. We continue to be touched as to how so many still travel such great distances to be together- once again, invalid brother Valerij made the several days journey from his home in far northern Russia, not far from the Arctic Circle, in order to be with us and contribute so enthusiastically to all the discussions. Those journeys he makes are real journeys of faith, involving many hours of buses and even hitch hiking on icy roads in temperatures of - 30 degrees before he reaches the northernmost terminus of the Russian railways; from thence to Moscow, and then further south to the Ukraine:



The final evening was as usual devoted to recitations of Scripture, poems written for the Bible School, and various plays performed by our increasingly aging but joyful brother and sisterhood of the former USSR. Some sisters had written poems for the Bible School, and others had planned short plays by correspondence [snail mail] with each other for several months. It's impossible to capture the spirit of these wonderful evenings- do come to the Summer Bible School in Moscow and experience it for yourselves!



Truly we give thanks for the great work the Lord has done in these last days in this previously very dark part of the earth.

CHINA

The progress of the true Gospel in China continues, and we're pleased to share the report of another *Bible Basics* contact, HU, being baptized by brother Ai:

"I baptized brother Hu by immersion in the pool, the photos were a bit unclear because of the steam from the hot pool. He is very keen in studying the Bible and any literature about the Bible. We spent much time discussing the Bible, and how best we can serve God. We talked about faith and works, and also about the book of Esther, and why it's not quoted in the New Testament and wasn't found in the Dead Sea scrolls. But the main thing is that our new brother knows the truth, realizes we are sinners, and realizes we do not have the possibility to be perfect as Jesus was, as we have already sinned. Our brother had previously been very frustrated and even depressed by this fact. And so he was the more eager to be baptized into Christ so as to be counted right with God. I encouraged him to be positive, to accept God's grace always, and try to preach and share *Bible Basics* with others so they too might know God's grace".

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks