

July 2011 First timers in Latvia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 4, and there's an MP3 about this chapter at www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt4.mp3

FIRST TIMERS IN LATVIA

Our visit to Riga and Moscow has seemed like an Abraham journey. It has felt as though God has asked us to go to a land he would show us without telling us much about what we would find. This has meant trusting that God would bless us in this journey even though it has been difficult to know what that blessing would be. Of course, we knew there would be a language barrier and cultural differences, but we trusted that the good news of the kingdom of God would override the challenges we would inevitably face. The brothers and sisters we encountered in Riga were many and varied as it is in most places around the world. What was clear from quite early, however, was the passion they had for discussing God's word. It was a delight to see many participate in the discussions and contribute to the prayers, which can sometimes be lacking in other parts of the world. It was also a real highlight to witness three baptisms on Sunday 26th June at the local beach: SERGEJ, SANDRA and NIKOLAJ as well as MIKHAIL on Wednesday 28th June. Despite the language barrier, it was clear from the expression in their faces that it was with great joy that they were surrendering their lives. We pray that our Heavenly Father will bless his new children in their journey of faith.

Photos: After the baptisms in the sea; reading the Bible together in a cafe on the beach



Many people in Riga have few worldly possessions and little hope of a better existence. But this has meant they are much more open to responding to the invitation of Jesus. This has reminded us of the parable of the wedding banquet where many who are comfortable in their lives will excuse themselves from the banquet and so the invitation goes out to the poor, blind and lame. How often it is that those who are rich do not know they are poor and those in Christ who are poor show themselves to be rich. When we have much in the form of earthly possessions we can fail to appreciate what is really worthwhile. It has been clear to us that Jesus has lit up the lives of the brothers and sisters in Riga and is working with them and through them. It has also been a delight to learn how one brother or sister has shared their faith with another and another so that many have come to see Jesus as their Lord. It has certainly been an encouragement for us to know there are many in Riga who are seeking God and so we encourage them all to wear the wedding garment which is the Lord Jesus himself. Jesus is our holiness and righteousness when we allow him to work in our lives.

On a sadder note, we heard of Brother Igar's sad situation. He is terminally ill in hospital and in need of palliative care but lacks the financial resources to access pain killing drugs. This is an opportunity to care for this brother in his difficult days as well as other brothers and sisters who are in need of health care which they are unable to afford. [Donations would likely need to cover between 600 and 1000 \$]

Love in Jesus

Rick & Janine Hennig