

July 2013 Impressions of Latvia and Russia

The *Bible Companion* readings this Sunday include Matthew 8 and there's an MP3 on this chapter at <http://www.aetheiacollege.net/audio/mt8.mp3>

Bro John & Sis Erica Galbraith of the Castle Hill, Australia ecclesia have been in Latvia and Russia recently, where brother John gave studies at the **Moscow Bible School**. Here is their report and news from the field there:

LATVIA

On our way to the Moscow Bible School we were able to spend a few days in **Riga**. Being the middle of summer the weather was actually warm (certainly not hot) and Riga looked at its beautiful best, hiding the fact that in winter temperatures may get down to minus 20 degrees C and those without heating may freeze to death. We spent some time with Duncan and Cindy Heaster and their two delightful little children. Then on Sunday we were able to participate in the activities and break bread with over 70 brothers and sisters in the Ecclesial hall. As we went through the 3 readings and partook of the emblems we pray that all were encouraged as we were, as we considered the great things God has done for us in Jesus Christ. After the meeting we were able to help a little (very little) in providing hot soup to all who came. Many were Russians with no job and no social security entitlements and so struggle to feed themselves and find shelter. They greatly appreciate the nourishing soup Cindy and Duncan provide. On Sunday afternoon we drove to the beach on the Baltic Sea and were delighted to witness the baptism of ANDRE and his mother EMMA. Emma is very sick with advanced cancer and Andre's care and love for his mother is apparent to all and very touching to witness. They have both been regular attendees at Riga meetings for 2-3 years. We drove them home to their one room containing a double bed and all their possessions. Access to this upstairs is through another similar room occupied, Andre said, by a prostitute. There is power but not enough for winter heating, no hot water or bathroom and only a shared outside toilet. Surviving winter will be a problem so as Duncan said "We will have to monitor their situation". On Monday we tripped around beautiful Riga before lunch at Duncan and Cindy's place. Erica and Cindy then headed off to peel potatoes and prepare the soup for bible class attendees in the afternoon/evening. We are not sure what is called evening here in June as it is only dark for about 4 hours in 24. After consideration of Matthew 8, over 60 enjoyed Erica's and Cindy's beautiful thick soup and I enjoyed communicating with the few brothers and sisters that spoke a little English. Our reaction to what we see here in Riga? We thank God for the spiritual and physical food that He is providing for the poor here in Riga and urge Him to send His Son back to bring in the time when all those who hunger or thirst for physical and spiritual food will be filled.



RUSSIAN BIBLE SCHOOL

Erica and I have just finished lunch on the fourth day of the Moscow Bible school. We have been privileged to join nearly 80 of our Christadelphian brothers and sisters and friends from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia and Moldova for a period of bible study and fellowship. Those from Moldavia spent 30 hours on a train to get to Moscow before a bus trip to the bible school venue from Moscow. We are at a large hotel/conference centre approximately 60 kilometers from Moscow situated in lush natural woodlands. We had always thought of Moscow as cold and

snowy but here in July it is hot and humid so that most of the talks and activities are held out in the open in an amphitheatre. Lighting is no problem as it is light from 4:00 am to 11:00 pm. After breakfast, the activities commence at 10am with the 3 readings. Following each reading a talk and what is becoming very lively discussion ensues. This discussion has to be terminated at midday to allow a bible talk before lunch which up to now has been on the letter to the Colossians led by myself. We would love to understand Russian and so follow the discussion and other talks by Bro Duncan and other Russian brothers but can sometimes pick up the gist of it from the broken English of brothers or sisters sitting near us or some comments in English by brother Duncan. In the question session questions included, the origin of the Israeli priests mentioned in Exodus before God ordained any, and why Abraham was asked to offer up Isaac. It is great to see so many of the brothers and sisters contributing to the discussion. I found talking, with a brother interpreting, a challenge but I am sure the brethren doing the interpreting found me a greater challenge and I thank brothers Alexei, Igor and Duncan for their efforts.

As the Bible school has progressed the talking and discussion has become more lively and the enjoyment and fellowship between everyone here greater. I know leaving will be a "sweet sorrow" as we "commend all here God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified"

Bro. John Galbraith

We're pleased to report the baptism of nine brothers and sisters: ALEXEI, a man who has studied Bible Basics from Kostroma, Russia; IRINA, mother of bro Zhenya who was baptized 20 years ago, one of the first we baptized in Russia; NATALYA, from Krasnodar in southern Russia; DIMA, ALEXEI and VLADIMIR from the Pavlograd ecclesia in Ukraine; PETYA, son of sis. Tamara from Poltava; OLYA, mother of br Alexei from Ukraine; and OLGA, sister in law of sis. Luba from Moldova. There was great rejoicing afterwards. In most bedrooms at the conference center, discussion about the Bible continued late into every night. There is really a great love of God's word and His Son in these dear brothers and sisters. Deep appreciation was expressed for all the donations which make these schools possible.



With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks