

June 2017 Latvia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Hebrews 11 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/heb11.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and *Bible Companion* bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

God clearly had a major plan for the tiny Baltic country of **Latvia** and the Russian majority suburbs of **Riga**, its capital city. There have been hundreds of baptisms there, and a large ecclesia established. But generally they are the poor of this world, on the very bottom rung of society. The Russian 'minority' are given no pension or social welfare support, even though most of them were born in Latvia and worked there all their lives. The breakup of the USSR and the Communist system meant that there is no fund from which to pay them pensions, and so those without family support find themselves without income once they stop working. And they end up living in night shelters for about 300 days every year, having to fend for themselves the rest of the time. They typically are allowed to leave nothing in the shelter, sleeping in dormitories with many others, with TB rife. They must be out by 8 a.m. and are allowed back in around 8 p.m.

The tragedy is that many of these folks worked all their lives. They have understandably become attracted to the Gospel and many have been baptized. The *Bible Centre* seeks to provide them with nutritious warm food most days of the week in the Winter [which can be extremely cold in Latvia]. We give one hour of coffee / tea and fellowship followed by one hour Bible study and then one hour of feeding and further fellowship. Here's brother Vladimir with his stick, reading the day's chapter to the Bible class; and another brother Vladimir, a one time guard on the Berlin wall [on the Soviet side], now baptized and also leading the readings:



Duncan & Cindy & family were recently three weeks with them all, and the feeding scheme will resume on a 5 days / week basis later this year. We do really need your financial donations to enable this work to continue. It's not just the purchase of the food which we cook for them, but there are a whole range of other expenses related to operating a building and project such as this. And if you'd like to come and help- please contact us. No language skills are required. It really is a unique opportunity to mesh provision of food and welfare with the preaching of the Gospel.

It's not uncommon to see our middle aged and elderly brothers and sisters collecting glass bottles in order to get the tiny deposit back on them; and an 80 year old brother turned up at the hall with a slipper on one foot and plastic sandal on the other, which he had foraged out of garbage cans:



This sister is struggling with cervical cancer?, whilst she cares for her 11 year old retarded grandson, and cares for both her former husbands in her small flat as they are in the final stages

of dying from cancer. Spare a prayer for her:



The very least we can do is to provide food and clothing for them all:



We also support ecclesias and small groups in other parts of Latvia and Cindy also has a circle of baptized converts and interested contacts who attend her Women and Children's Camp in northern Latvia and other meetings at the housing project Carelinks run in northern Latvia. Her camp was again successful this year, thanks so much to those who enabled it. It was great to see urban kids being able to enjoy nature outside the city, and to actually touch animals- one of the activities was an outing to a chinchilla farm, which rears chinchillas for their skins, which are used to make Winter coats:



We were also able to distribute clothing at the *Bible Centre*; here is the 12 year old daughter of a brother and a sister in her 80s looking through the boxes:



We naturally try to help materially as far as we can, but the greatest thing we can provide is the hope of the Kingdom and encouragement to keep in the Way there. So many of those baptized are now asleep in Christ in this great hope. The meetings at the hall are a wonderful opportunity to build friendships over coffee and share life as well as mutually remind ourselves of the eternal perspective we have on it all:



We also run an English language house church; not all our contacts are quite up to attending large meetings where the majority are street people and many are coughing with TB throughout the meetings. This too prospers, and we recently reported another baptism from this:



It's all a wonderful work. Please, please do pray we can continue it, pray for the brothers and sisters there, and please do continue to donate.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks