

## **LATVIA December 2003**

### **PLEASE PRAY WITH US**

The work continues here, we've had a great upsurge of interest but not so many baptisms just recently. We've spent a lot of time with the B family, Sis Lidija was going steadily downhill for a while. We got her a cataract operation, and her response was that she was so glad she could see again to do her Bible readings. She and her 2 baptized sons were living in a very run down apartment up many flights of stairs. The wheelchair we got her was well used and they were so grateful for it. The total and devoted care for her by the two boys we commented on at the time, and it was a fine token to their Christianity. We're sorry to say that Sis Lidija fell asleep in the Lord recently, and is at rest from her sufferings in sure hope of the Kingdom. They are being thrown out of their apartment for unpaid bills- they only had her pension to live off- and the only state rehousing they've been offered is in a broken down home with no windows. It would be totally impossible to live there in the Winter. The boys are trying to do odd jobs but unemployment in their town is one of the worst in Latvia. We took the funeral on a very cold day, in driving snow. Were it not for the brotherhood's support they couldn't have even paid for this, and as it is all that's been paid for is the actual burial, they have no funds for even a grave or stone. If any feel like donating for this we could arrange for this. About 9 people turned up for the funeral in total. It was one of those occasions when one felt that all the work and suffering has been worth it. The brother who took the funeral reminded the family of how Lidija had read Bible Basics and with great difficulty been baptized, into the death and resurrection which she now awaited. We explained that she had then read the Bible daily using the Bible Companion planner, which we were able to distribute. All the unbaptized people there asked afterwards to be baptized, so we are working on teaching them. They're a lovely family. It was all a great testimony to the Truth. They express their deep gratitude to you all for the support that enabled the funeral and the other support. We've been taking care of Sasha, the youngest son, as he is literally shaking with grief and is very broken down. He's staying in Riga for some time until he feels better. We do ask for your prayers for them.

PHOTO: Sis. Lidija's poorly attended funeral [the crucifix is part of a neighbouring grave not our sister's].

The housing project is going well, Br Steve has now completed underpinning the foundations and we're working on making the whole place better insulated and warmer. It could ideally do with being clad but this will be expensive. We're attracting quite some interest from the local community who are amazed that such a project could happen. Poverty makes people so selfish, and it's a joy to share the light of God's grace in Christ with these folks.

John, Angela and Steve have been over and done lots of good work. Many contacts are developing well. We're pleased to report the baptisms of LARISA, ILMARS and SANTA, a mother and her two adult children. They were involved with JWs, but after extensive study and excellent confessions of faith were baptized into the Lord Jesus. They live as do so many in a remote location often cut off by snow drifts. Yet they are insistent to spread the light of the truth as far as they can.

Sis. Svetlana continues to have problems with her kidney which affect her ability to breast feed her baby. We bought a large amount of food for the family which they were delighted to receive. The whole family are dressed in clothes donated by Western brethren and sisters. They are so very isolated, several kilometres over fields to the nearest road. There are many ongoing

medical needs amongst the brethren and sisters in these parts. They are subsistence farmers with little cash income, and what little they get from occasional work in lumbering goes on clothes. It's becoming increasingly difficult to meet all the regular needs for basic health care which these poor folk have, weakened as they are by years of living on potatoes and carrots and sleeping in poorly heated hovels.

John and Angela were very impressed by the poverty and urgency of the needs.

