

Latvian Bible School, June 2008

The last two weeks have seen the power of God and the spirit of Christ powerfully at work in northern Latvia, where a group of brothers and sisters from all over the world have worked with Latvian bre & sis and their children to prepare the Bible School venue we've been working on for so long. Although the showers weren't fixed, no electricity in parts of the building, some flooring unfinished, amongst other things, around 60 bre & sis and contacts attended [click on the thumbnails to see larger images]. Whilst most were from Latvia, there were some from all over the world- our speaker Brother martin Rzoestraten from Holland, Sister Sonia from France, Br Tim & Sis Sherri from USA, brothers Marcus and Mark from England, as well as brothers Albinas and Justas from Lithuania.

Photo: around 60 bre & sis and contacts attended



Photo: This was how the dining room looked when Brothers Stuart Barratt (Horley), Marcus Heaster (Walton) and Mark Leadbetter (Maidenhead) arrived:



Photo: Bit by bit, with the additional help of brother Tim and sister Sherri Thorson from the USA, the room was cleared and flooring put down:



Photo: And of course there was dust and endless cleaning to be done everywhere- here's sis. Sherri at work in the toilet block:



Mark is a carpenter and a true craftsman- as well as a patient teacher of his eager volunteer team, which ranged from 12 year old daughters of local bre & sis, to a 75 year old brother from England. Work literally went on day and night, everyone just grabbing a few hours sleep when they needed it, and the atmosphere was simply wonderful! Working for a common goal, against the clock, conscious of our imperfections, reading the Scriptures together, cooking together and for each other- it was a wonderful experience, and we commend this kind of project to others. Academic Bible study is one thing, but working together in this kind of situation brings us into deep fellowship with each other and enables us to understand each other far better than merely talking together about abstract issues.

Brother Raimonds and Sister Liga were very helpful and the girls along with their friend Kristina worked like zealots. They painted, cooked for the other workers, helped Cindy lay carpet... and proved to us all what 12-14 year olds are capable of once they get motivated in the Lord's cause. They were really outstanding and kept all of us going by their zeal. It was an especial delight to read with them each evening:



Time and again, in small crisis after small crisis, we were shown the active power of God, that He really is active in our lives, and does exceeding abundant above all we ask or think. An example was in the simple fact our funds had run low and we still had no tables. A brother in France with a furniture business 'happened' to have 80 slightly damaged table tops; an American brother kindly funded the transport; and so instead of worrying about where we might get a few tables from, and even starting to make one ourselves from scrapwood, we found ourselves with no fewer than 80 tables arriving one morning in a huge truck, so huge it frightened some local old ladies, from where the tables were unloaded through the window of the conference room. The Almighty almost seems to have a sense of humour- as if to say 'Worried about tables, aren't you... thinking of buying 2 and making 2, and worried you still will not have enough... well OK, I will send a huge truck to you with 80 tables in, and a few whiteboards and markers in, just to show I love you all there...!

So here are some pictures of the tables and their arrival:



And then there was the need for more chairs... and another American brother sent funds for these, so, we were able to get enough so that there were precisely 60 chairs, and as it happened, exactly 60 people were there to sit on them...



And so finally the visitors arrived, and we'll let brother Martin Rozestraten report on his impressions:

"When I arrived at the converted home I did not fully realize that so much hard work had already been done on the building over the last 18 months. Brothers and sisters worked almost day and night in the weeks before the Bible School to prepare the building for use. I don't know the names of all those who worked, but I know brother Albinas from Lithuania, and I would like to mention brother Mark from Maidenhead ecclesia in England, an experienced carpenter who installed the laminate floor in the dining room and made the tables, completing just hours before the Bible School started. Brother Tim from Idaho, USA assisted him, and his wife Sherry helped cleaning the property. I want to make special mention of three young teenage girls, Kristina, Ieva and Anna who worked almost non-stop from dawn to past midnight for a week. We

are thankful to God who motivated all of us to between us finish the conference hall just in time for the lectures to begin.

I remember the Bible School in Jurmala, Latvia which I was present at in November 2005, when we met in a Soviet-era hotel. About 30 were present then, and now three years later, there were 60 present assembled to listen to talks and participate in Bible studies. Personally I found the reflections on Isaiah 52 and 53 by brother Duncan most thought provoking and helpful. The Old Testament is really a light to our path to understand the New Testament. I had the pleasure to give talks on the Lord's prayer (Luke 11 and Matthew 6) and John 17, and give an exhortation at the memorial meeting on 'Growing in the knowledge of God' based on Jude 20. Remembering our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the emblems of bread and wine was the final highlight of the weekend. The fellowship and personal discussions among brethren and sisters warmed my heart. May our God and Father grant more of these inspiring weekends together. I know that so many benefited from the talks and fellowship because of their own comments to me".

There was much note taking on the talks, and evidence of independent Bible reading even during the breaks. Our deaf family were all present and had the talks transcribed for them. We were pleased to have a number of young children, to whom brother Martin presented puppets and other presents from the Ede ecclesia in Holland.

It was great to see brothers and sisters exchanging addresses and forging friendships in Christ:



One reason for the success of the project is the level of involvement in the project by local brethren & sisters; some brought more flowers to plant in the garden, and others invited their family and friends to come to meeting in the hall they had helped plaster or paint. The breaking of bread was a fitting climax to our wonderful time together:



After everyone left... some local brothers and sisters stayed on.

Our amazing young people swept and washed the house... 60 sets of bedding had to be gathered and washed... and brothers Albinas and Justas are still working away, cladding the fireplaces.



There were many discussions about how we could use the property, and some local sisters are planning on running their own weekend there soon... but the thing is, it's actually very far from finished! Anyone interested in coming over or supporting in any way... please let us know!

Please pray for this wonderful project! We so appreciate all those who've supported in various ways.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks