

## October 2011 Winter Heating Project

The *Bible Companion* readings this Sunday include Acts 8 and there's an MP3 on this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/acts8.mp3>

We appreciate your donations for this project and do encourage your continued donations. We're like to share with news about just two of the many cases we are assisting already. We have begun purchasing and distributing firewood to those in need. Here's Brother Marcus loading up the van with firewood for distribution:



Marcus reports as follows on one of the distributions:

"I met a young married couple at the ecclesial Bible class, Tanya & Slavik, they seemed dressed OK and had mobile phones. She works cleaning the dishes at a supermarket, but they only give part time work to avoid having to pay people like her the minimum salary. They charged their mobile phones from the sockets at the Bible Center, but I had no idea of their level of poverty until we took them some firewood and some blankets knitted by sister Debbie Clements and her friends from Horley ecclesia. They had been renting a room, paid three months in advance, and then someone, probably the landlady, vandalized the electric meter and disconnected it, for which there's a huge fine from the electric company. They therefore ran away from that place, but having no family they had nowhere to go and are biased against as they are Russian. They are living in a shed on an allotment, very thin walls, almost cardboard, with no electricity, heating, running water, sanitation or anything. There's a lot of water in the atmosphere in Latvia and the temperatures are below freezing at night. They are 28 and 21 years old, workers and responsible people, she is pregnant and I dread to think how harmful it is to live in such a situation where it is not only cold but so very damp. The bright light of the flash in the photos means it's hard to express the darkness and dampness of their situation. They try to keep warm and dry by making an open fire. It is typical of the world we now live in that a couple like that can have cheap mobile phones and have low paying jobs and yet be living in such abject poverty. We gave them some money, firewood and blankets but if they can't manage to get a warm room to live in before the heavy snow comes down our Christian conscience would mean that we should fund this for them. I was most touched that they didn't ask for anything. May God bless them and their baby".



Brother Ivan lives in far northern Siberia, with Winter temperatures around -40 Centigrade, and must be one of the most remote brethren on the planet. He was baptized in 2000 and his wife and one of his 8 children 3 years later. He has been very faithful and leads his family in the reading and love of God's word each day. It's hard to adequately describe his place. They live a day's travel from the nearest big town. You travel for many hours and then arrive at a major river about 1 km. wide. You can only get there in the Winter months when the river is frozen and you can charter a large vehicle to drive over the river and then another couple of hours beyond there along tracks in the forest; if you are caught in a blizzard, you could be in serious trouble. There's

no cell phone coverage and nobody to come rescue you in any case. There used to be a light aircraft which flew over the river in the Summer months but it crashed. The journey there has only been made twice, once by Duncan alone and once by Duncan & Cindy together. Another attempt was made and failed because of the river crossing.

Here on the very margins of civilization, life's difficult. Stalin sent protestors to the Soviet regime to camps in this area; Ivan and his family, however, are local to the area. They have three months of the year without snow, when they grow and preserve what they can, and in the long Winter they live by killing the animals they raise, some hunting, and especially ice fishing. There is no church building or representative of any religion up there apart from Ivan himself. Ivan has all our books in Russian and has read and re-read them many times. Health care is minimal, and so when your horse dies and your animals all die from a plague, and your twin sons have a congenital heart defect that needs operating on, life is very hard. We have just received a letter as follows, carefully written in copperplate Cyrillic handwriting:

"Greetings to you all in Christ. For some years now we've not met, and we are lacking fellowship here, like trying to breathe without oxygen. The lack of visible fellowship with others can lead to a lack of watchfulness for Christ's return. But in other ways, the Lord reminds us of His presence with us, of whose we are and whom we serve. He has done this with us in the last year through bringing hard problems into our lives. Firstly our horse died. He was not only our only source of transport, but our friend. We used him to gather firewood and transport it home, and to ride out to the river where we fished, more and more we relied upon fish throughout the Winter. And then one by one, all our animals died from some plague. Pigs, chickens, goats, all died one after the other and we buried them one by one in our yard. So we are in a very hard situation this Winter. We have only three months growing season and we have only a few small potatoes and root crops to last us the Winter. And then on top of all this my mother became ill and died. And now, the twins [twin boys] need heart operations, they have a defect from birth. We have absolutely no way to pay for this and we must take them to the city for that. So I don't know, whether it is God's will that we shall all perish one by one as did our animals. Please pray for us. And please send us more of the New Testaments with Duncan's commentary. They are very useful for us. But above all please pray for us and don't forget us here".

Here are some pictures which hopefully provide some focus for your prayers. Apart from prayer and donation of funds, we wonder if there are any adventurous travellers out there who'd fancy making a challenging journey to this dear family?

Cindy being transported by their faithful horse; Ivan ice fishing, having ridden his horse to the frozen river;



a sheep killed to celebrate our visit [notice Ivan's home made animal skin jacket]; Ivan leading some of the family in Bible study;



assisting Ivan baptize his wife, sis. Anna; a special feast prepared to celebrate Anna's

baptism, including candy from Australia



We will be sending funds to cover the heart operations and to try to provide some help this Winter. ***Please do donate if you can to the Winter Heating appeal so that we can continue to assist Ivan and his family and many like them.***

**With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks**