

## **Serbia, Russia & Belarus, October 2006**

We're delighted to report on an extensive visit around Eastern Europe, visiting contacts, strengthening our brothers and sisters and assessing and providing assistance with material needs where needed.

### **SERBIA**

The CCM strive to develop autonomous, self-sufficient ecclesias, and to encourage local converts to preach and care for each other on their own initiative as far as they can. We're pleased to say that in Serbia this is beginning to take form. Our Serbian brethren at their own expense developed and pay hosting for a Serbian language website, which you can see here { <http://www.christadelphians-srbija.com/> } if you're interested. They are also active on various internet forums in Serbian language. As a result of this, many have become interested and have been sent Bible Basics in Serbian. After extensive correspondence we were delighted to meet up with NIKOLA and baptize him into Christ. He's a PhD student who's been through a number of groups and is convinced he has now found the pearl of great price. It was wonderful to be present at the breaking of bread with him and hear a service conducted in Serbian by local brethren who had played a part in his conversion.



Photo: Breaking bread with our new brother [in the centre, red shirt]

Another development has been local brethren producing their own literature, and they now have several full colour brochures in Serbian with their local address, the above website {<http://www.christadelphians-srbija.com/> }, and also the central Carelinks address on.

Photo: Brother William with the new Serbian literature

Our brother Vladislav continues to need dialysis every second day, but for all that he remains strong in faith and ever more active in witnessing. He's delighted to have contact with a number of Russian brethren with whom he writes regularly- you can see him here in the photo with the Russian 'Zvezda' magazine and also the new Bible Timeline by Sis. Robin Jones. This is a full colour timeline with nice colour illustrations by Robin. Ordering information is at <http://www.carelinks.net/books/rj/Timelinead.pdf> .



Serbia continues riddled by corruption- you may've heard of major demonstrations there and in other Eastern European states recently at the extent of Government corruption. Even doctors and hospital administrators demand back handers from Vladislav in order for him to have the dialysis which keeps him alive. Please do pray for him- he's a wonderful brother and his life is very hard indeed.

Continuing this theme of encouraging local responsibility, we made a pastoral visit to the ecclesias in **Kazan, Russia**. Again, Robin's timelines were well received.



Photo: Sis Svetlana with her Bible timeline

Sister Ludmila Kuritsyina is now in her 80s but continues to host a very dynamic and functional ecclesia in her apartment. After personally converting over 200 brethren & sisters in Kazakhstan in the last 10 years, she is now living near her family in Kazan, Russia. Despite some health problems she has an active mind and does all she can for the growth and welfare of her ecclesia which she's now established in Kazan. It's good to see the brothers and sisters there working together so well and so responsibly in order to spread and defend the Gospel on their own initiative. It's amazing how the ripples of God's truth are spreading throughout the former USSR. A deaf brother in Latvia converted hearing / speech impaired brother Andrej in Kazan to the faith- and here is brother Andrej, despite his disability, teaching the gospel to OLEG



Photo: Andrej [right] with Oleg at their home Bible study in Kazan, Russia

Ludmila really is a dynamo still, and it was a joy to witness the baptism of Oleg [a near neighbour of hers] in her bath tub.



Photo: "One more for the Lord"- another baptism in Sis Ludmila's bath tub

Ludmila's an example to us all and devoting her time to the constant study, teaching and defence of the Gospel. She's ably helped by her 'right hand man' in Kazan, brother Viktor; and her 'right hand woman' sister Lidia

Photo: Sis Ludmila with Bro Viktor during a breaking in the Bible readings from the Bible



Companion

Photo: Sis Lidia fondly listening to Sis Ludmila at the conclusion of a breaking of



bread

Greatly encouraged by our time here, we went on to **Belarus**, where again Sis Larissa is leading home groups with other sisters in her town. It was a pleasure to baptize INNA, sister in the flesh to brother Andrej baptized earlier this year. An ecclesia in Canada kindly signed cards for various brethren and sisters, and it was a pleasure to present these to sisters like Larissa. Our prayers are with her and her children in their struggles with the consequences of the nuclear radiation Larisa received many years ago and which has had genetic effects on the children. They are often sick due to their malfunctioning thyroids and it seems hard to concretely do anything beyond booster medication to actually solve the problem.



Photo: Sis Larissa and Ira with the card from Canada

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM