

Sister Nina, May 2006

The Latvian Bible School is attended by many faithful brothers and sisters, some of whom are subsistence farmers. We had a note from sister Nina, that she couldn't come because her farm had burnt down. Duncan, Marcus, Nick and Rachel dashed over to Eastern Latvia to see our sister as soon as the School ended. We arrived at her place, which is off any tarmac road, to find her at work in the field, putting up earth around her potatoe plants with her bare hands as her hoe and other implements had been burnt. Nina is typical of many in this area, given a patch of land on a former collective farm to work, storing her harvest over the Winter, and basically working until she drops. Many die of cold and weakness each year. Their lives are bound up with the land and their few animals. Our sister has to walk about 10 km to the nearest shop, and has very little money anyway to buy anything. Despite that, she reads Scripture faithfully and prays constantly. We found that her barn had burnt down to the ground completely.



The remains of Sister Nina's barn

She explained how she drew water from the well and threw it on the flames but the wind was strong. She heard her cow, calves and chickens die in the flames whilst she vainly tried to pour buckets of water on the blaze. She's totally traumatized by the whole experience. She frequently burst into prayer, and was deeply appreciative of the clothes, food and cash we were able to leave with her. She explained how the flames came within a metre of the shed where her other potatoes are:



She explained how the flames came within a metre of the shed

Here's a picture of Nina's remaining pile of potatoes, which is all she had to eat until the potatoe plants can be harvested later in the Summer:



Nina's remaining pile of potatoes

To see such a faithful, lonely sister, clearly very spiritually minded, in such a state of loss was really tragic. She has a habit of quite naturally bursting into prayer in her shed :



bursting into prayer in her shed

We don't like sharing such emotional photos as the following, but we do so because we wish to share with you her sense of loss and tragedy and invite your prayers for her. She still has a place to sleep, but she is left with a small pile of potatoes in another shed that wasn't burnt. She

offered to boil some for us, which was very touching. It was really hard not to weep with those that weep.



She's getting on as best she can, working the land by hand and planting what she can to make use of the short growing season that's now coming up.

What we'd like to do is try to build a shed for her in which she can keep some goats and chickens. Otherwise, she has only potatoes to eat. The goats and chickens would give her milk, meat and eggs to eat. She also needs a spade and hoe and knives at the very least. It was just so tragic to see her working the earth with her bare hands.

So please do spare some prayers for Nina as she sits traumatized in her shed, reading the Bible, praying, crying, and, as she says, realizing that in any case she is getting older and weaker and is moving towards the end of her current walk with the Lord:

Obviously there are financial issues involved in helping our sister. We're still resolving what is best to do- to buy a kit shed and erect it ourselves [any labourers welcome!], pay someone to put something up for her, and which animals and at what age to get for her. Short of visiting her on site, communication is difficult; without a 4WD vehicle it would've been hard to even get to her, and the usual way is to walk over the fields. Any suggestions, donations or practical help really will be appreciated.

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM