

## Winter Care Update, December 2006

Work continues fixing up our accommodation / meeting place project in Latvia- just removed the thick mud-and-dung ceilings, resulting in a vast amount of waste piled up outside the property as you can see below:



Photo: waste piled up outside the property

We do ask for your prayers and for offers of practical help from anyone who fancies doing some light construction or painting work!

Last Summer we reported to you about the tragic fire at Sis. Nina's farm, and the efforts made to fix things up for her and lay on irrigation- see

<http://www.carelinks.net/care/nin0106.htm> and <http://www.carelinks.net/care/nin1008.htm> .

We're pleased to say that final touches have been put to the new building, and Sis Nina invited our attendance to bless it. As previously reported, our sister lives very close to the Lord, and bursts into prayer [and tears too!] quite spontaneously. We took her some firewood, and as you can see from the photo, she was extremely and visibly grateful. Time and again she enquires why anyone would bother with her, a peasant farmer woman in her 70s living a few hours walk from any made road.



Photo: We took her some firewood

We might add that CCM are very aware of the planet's environmental crisis, and seek wherever we can to operate in a way that preserves environmental resources. So instead of buying logs, we bought compacted columns of sawdusted wood that gives more heat and burns slower than 'wet' wood. Sister Nina had never seen this kind of wood, and it took some explaining to her that we really should try not to just cut down the forests [Latvia is one of the most tragic cases of this]- see photo below:



Photo: we bought compacted columns of sawdusted wood

It was great to see the colossal work of Steve and Robin Jones over the Summer now come to fruition. Here's a file photo of Steve with the mapped-out foundations of the new building in July:



Photo: mapped-out foundations of the new building

It's now finally built, including a dog house to guard our sister. Here's Nina, typically overcome with gratitude and emotion, outside it:



Photo: Nina, outside it

It was with great joy and emotion and genuine thankfulness that sister Nina formally opened the doors to us:



Photo: sister Nina formally opened the doors

You may note she's wearing a white fleece- this was given to her in the Summer, as you can see from the file photo below:



Photo: she's wearing a white fleece

What's encouraging about our sister is that she is so very appreciative. She says she's learnt so much about grace through all this. She was very touched to see her photo on the front cover of our Russian language Zvezda magazine. She says she just can't believe that her unknown brothers and sisters would worry about her, pray for her, support her, not only in the West but also by prayer and interest in her situation throughout the large territory of the former USSR. She gets quite overcome by this experience of the grace both of God and His grace shown through others. She wishes us to say that her tears are tears of joy and nothing else. She kept asking "Why? Why? Why? Would God or you bother with ME?". Sitting in her new 'domik' we had a very wonderful discussion about grace which for all of us in different ways was really quite profound. We left with an abiding impression of having been 'surprised by grace', even to the point of tears.



sister Nina

Almost every word and every phrase of 2 Cor. 9:8-15 is so relevant to this situation: "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor; His righteousness abideth for ever. And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us

thanksgiving to God. For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift".

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Finally, some reflections from a recently baptized brother in the Vancouver, WA ecclesia- we reported Scott and Lisa's baptism at <http://www.carelinks.net/care/Baptisms3011.htm> and as always, asked for your prayers. Perhaps we all wonder how our newly baptized brothers and sisters are getting on after their baptisms. Well, here's a bit of very helpful and insightful reflection from Brother Scott:

### **Personal Testimony**

Bro. Scott Ketelsen (Vancouver Ecclesia, USA)

*Now some time after my baptism and looking at myself, I find myself looking at something deep within me. I am discovering an "unhealthy fear of the Lord" within me. So afraid to do his will and do the right thing, to conform my life to His will and His standards while not allowing His love and grace to cover, and expecting others to conform to "MY" will or standards. An unacceptance of His gift if you will. To put it in a term "legalism". Too blind to see the freedom and liberty we have been given. I am being set free in this area and am experiencing a new joy and peace in my heart.*

*There must be certain things that are "yea and Amen". If we just hold to the belief that "all truth is relative" then my truth is different than yours and no one can agree on anything. Yet, there are standards that we are expected to uphold. It may be different for each individual now as we are ALL in a different place in our growth and maturity in the things of God. The world we live in is really no different that what is was back in Yahshua's day. All kinds of philosophy and ideas about things mudding up the waters and mankind still trying to become gods in the process. In my opinion our dilemma is still the same. It all points to latent fears and unbelief in YHWH's word. We protect ourselves by hiding behind legalism and self imposed standards and try to force others to conform to our will. It is a vicious cycle that has perpetuated throughout the ages.*

*The question is "are we going to believe the word of YHWH or not?". Just because we have experiences does not make the word of God null and void. Yes, we do not know everything about the word, yes we will not all come to the full understandings of things until the Kingdom comes. But, one thing we do know for certain, it is our responsibility to regard one another more than our selves, to love our neighbor as ourselves.*

*Phil 4:7-8 7 "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things".*

*So, I am learning that "I am a sinner" I do not deserve His mercy and grace, but He has given it to us anyway. I cannot please Him by my outward works, or justify my Christianity by not doing certain things or eating certain meats, or partaking of certain symbols or traditions. But, the slippery slope is always beckoning to us, and therefore we all have a conscience given by God to help us here.*

*We all will be judged according to the law written on OUR (personal) hearts. Rom 2:14-16. There are standards and things we all must find and conform our lives to. It is not my responsibility to make anyone live according to my standard. The standard is the word of YHWH. The Law of love is the higher standard, 1 Cor 13. If we have not love we have nothing. I cannot compromise the law in my heart (this is my conscience before my judge) however, for the sake of another, to win another to salvation I can, (I am learning to) because my standard is not God's standard. The question is "are we willing to die to self for the sake another?" In a sense, lay down our life for another?*

*Yahshua came to lead sinners to repentance. He ate with tax collectors and sinners. The downtrodden, dirty filthy refuse of humanity He died for. All I know is that "my" righteousness has not exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees. If Yahshua did these things, should we not do the same? He said be "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" Matt 5:48 .*

*Yet I am sure He did not sit there amongst these wretched people and point the haughty finger of judgement. Making himself to be better than they. But, we do know that He did not sin. He sat with them but did not do do their deeds. He knew where the line was drawn in the sand, He did not cross it. The same should be for us. There are standards, there are doctrines we must be staunch on. Truth is NOT relative, but that should not become the god we serve.*