

## Winter Heating Appeal, September 2007



In previous years, Carelinks initiated a major project to try to meet the significant problem of suffering as a result of the very low temperatures in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. We provided funds to pay for heating bills, improved houses against the cold, installed internal toilets, delivered firewood, warm clothing, medical and other assistance to around 50 of our most needy brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe. As reported in our updates, we believe we did significantly alleviate the suffering of several families, single mothers and especially elderly brothers and sisters. Given rising fuel prices and the way the poor are getting poorer whilst the rich get richer, the average cost of heating an apartment in a country like Latvia is about the entire old age pension for our sisters. Those with no supporting relatives, living alone, are left with literally nothing to survive on over the Winter months. That's why one sees old women selling their fur coats and household contents on the streets... We therefore are obligated to provide for our brothers and sisters.

Photo: Scene outside the home of one of our sisters last Winter



In rural areas, brothers and sisters are already needing to stock up on firewood for the Winter.

Photo: Sister Olga has just written as follows:



"I am very busy to fill the wood shed with fire wood purchased at the sawmill site. It takes me all through summer on sunny days when the firewood is dry. My "holidays" are on rainy days when it is wet. It is much cheaper to carry it by the wheelbarrow little by little. Thanks God! God is so good that He gives me enough health to cope with all this work... I consider how great God is that He has done so many wonderful things for me. I cannot begin to recount them all. When I kneel to pray, tears of gratitude flow".

Our sister is well in her 70s- we've reproduced her letter because it is in English, but there are many similar communications in Russian.

Photo: Delivering firewood to our sister last year



So, now is the time to begin our assistance program again.

We're really appreciative of your previous support and we so hope it can continue this year. We'd like to remind you that CCM have no admin costs and no salaried workers, the administration of these projects is gladly done by our workers on a voluntary basis. The problems arise in the following areas in the following ways:

- In URBAN AREAS prices of property and fuel have risen enormously especially in the Baltic states. Some have gotten very wealthy, whilst the majority have become poorer, especially the elderly and those living alone [of whom there are many, thanks to the legacy of the USSR, which taught that the state would care for people from cradle to grave, and the family was unimportant]. This means that over the Winter, many elderly folk must pay all of their monthly pension just to cover heating bills. And yet they have to buy medicines and food [even if we provide many of them with clothing]

- Many of the blocks our folk live in are from the Soviet period and the heating can't be regulated; the heating is inefficient and oil fired, from the days when oil was cheap within the USSR. If heating isn't paid, residents are turned out, or if they own their apartment, the apartment is taken from them.

- In RURAL areas there are many subsistence farmers, living on parcels of land taken from former collective farms. These land parcels are often far from roads and shops. As folk get older and weaker, it becomes harder to scratch a living. Young people move to the towns; those with none to support them have very little cash income and yet they need to repair their homes and buy heating material to survive.

Summing up, each year large numbers of people die from the cold and related problems. These are mostly elderly folk living alone- and we have many such baptized as our brothers and sisters.

Please do pray for our brothers and sisters. But let's reflect on the perhaps inevitable passage that comes to mind- James 2:15-17: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself".

What we've done is to set up detailed information about some of the cases we wish to help at [http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter\\_Heating.html](http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter_Heating.html)

We encourage you to have a look at that page and see the specific needs; you can also donate online there.

We are appealing for a total of GBP £ 6,000 towards these causes.

You can send donations online as explained at <http://www.carelinks.net/about/donate.htm>

Cheques made out to 'Carelinks' can be accepted by our treasurer Bro. John Thatcher (Hurstville ecclesia), c/o Carelinks, PO Box 152, Menai NSW 2234 AUSTRALIA

or in North America to Brother Mike Warren (Vancouver WA ecclesia), Carelinks, PO Box 820392, Vancouver, WA 98682 USA email [pacificpath@msn.com](mailto:pacificpath@msn.com)

Carelinks is a tax deductible charity in the USA.;

or in the UK to Carelinks, c/o Robin & Jean Field (Kendal ecclesia), 4 Ellergreen, Burneside, Kendal LA9 5SD UK Email: [stratagems@ukf.net](mailto:stratagems@ukf.net)

You can either send towards the general need, or you may prefer to review the cases and decide to support particular cases. Although none of these folk are online, we'll personally update you as to progress. If you chose to support a specific case that's already been funded, we'll of course let you know; and we'll update our website accordingly too.

Here are just some of the cases- you can see pictures and more information at [http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter\\_Heating.html](http://www.carelinks.net/appeals/Winter_Heating.html)

### **Brother Fyodyor**



Brother Fyodyor is very deaf and walks with difficulty. He is a WW2 veteran and lives in a small town with a very low pension. He loves God's word and attends Bible gatherings even when he can't hear well. His pension isn't enough to cover his monthly heating bills let alone any other expenses such as food and medicines. APPEAL SUM: GBP 210

### **Brother Ivan and family**



Brother Ivan and his 6 children live in the far North of Russia near the Arctic Circle. Temperatures go down to -60 degrees C there. The growing season is short over the Summer and things are really hard for them over the Winter. Firewood needs to be bought and the children could do with more meat in their diet over the Winter. In the photo you can see him fishing through the ice to help provide protein for the children.

### **Sister Austra**



Austra is in her 80s and is without relatives. Her son died and she sleeps on his overcoat each night, and walks around in her hat and coat in the day time. Austra loves the Truth and sleeps with her Bibles under her pillow even though she can hardly read now.

### **Brother Viktor**



Brother Viktor suffers from cancer, emphysema and a heart condition. He tries to keep his apartment warm by piling up old clothes against the damp walls. He needs continued help in meeting heating and medical bills .

#### **Sister Dzidra**



Our invalid sister Dzidra lives alone most of the time and is cared for by another sister, who you can see breaking bread with her in the photo. Her pension simply isn't enough to cover the cost of Winter heating.

#### **Sister Evgeniya**



Our elderly sister Evgeniya lives alone with her goats [which she has indoors with her over the Winter] in Russia. She collects water in buckets which she places at the edge of her tin roof [see photo]. But temperatures got so low and firewood so expensive that in previous years she didn't even have enough heat in the house to melt the snow on the roof. She needs help with firewood and Winter repairs to her home.

#### **Sister Galina**

Sister Galina is a very faithful sister whose husband has died and so she is left alone to meet the Winter heating bills. In her area, the heating bills in the Winter are about the same as her monthly pension, leaving her with nothing to live off at all. We need to help her with the bills each month over the Winter.

#### **Sister Lilija**

Sister Lilija is a refugee from Kurdistan now living in Latvia. She lives in a women's shelter but she needs regular support as sometimes she sleeps in a cellar where she works. She works for a very low salary and is a regular attender at the ecclesia. Last Winter we assisted her and would like to do so again this year.

#### **Sister Ludmila [Russia] [1]**



Sister Ludmila was assisted last Winter by the heating appeal and she does need help again this year. She is a dwarf, has never been married, and is now elderly and living alone in a small house on the edge of a village, far from even the next house. She is frequently attacked by local

Moslem neighbours who break her windows and steal the bucket and chain on her well [see photo- she is using a saucepan to get water].

### **Sister Ludmila [Russia] [2]**



Sister Ludmila continues to need help with getting her place fixed up better against the Russian winter. It's hard and expensive to do building work there as she lives so far from anywhere.

### **Sister Nina**



We reported earlier on Sister Nina's tragic loss of her farm buildings which were burnt to the ground, including the loss of all her animals. Since then we've helped her rebuild as reported on carelinks. However she needs support this Winter as last Winter with buying firewood and some meat as she only has potatoes and some preserved vegetables to eat over the Winter.

### **Sister Rita**

Sister Rita works hard washing linen for a hotel but still it's hard for her to meet Winter heating bills on her apartment. You can see her in the photo receiving spectacles donated by sisters in the UK. In her case we would assist towards her heating bills rather than pay them completely.

### **Sister Sofia**



Sister Sofia lives faithfully in a tumbledown home. Four of her distant relatives have been baptized thanks to her preaching. However she is very weak physically, walking with difficulty with a stick, and although we've been able to fix up some things at her home, there are many other things that need doing to enable her to live reasonably over the Winter. The temperatures are down to -40 degrees C.

### **Sister Tanya**



Sister Tanya [in the photo, wrapped in blanket] is a very faithful sister who has led others to the way of life. She suffers with her health and has a very small pension- the heating bills in Winter

are about the same as her pension, which leaves her in a really difficult position so far as food, clothing and medicines are concerned. She tries to make her own medicines as she can't afford to buy them in Winter. We would like to make some contribution to her Winter heating this year.

### **Sister Zina**



Sister Zina lives in a small town, alone in her 80s. She is very shaky on her feet but has to walk 1 km. each way to the shop and even further to get her pension. She needs help with paying the heating over the Winter.

### **General- fixing windows**

Most heat is lost through windows and doors, and when people are spending their entire pension or wage on food, it becomes really hard for the elderly or some single women to be able to fix up their homes. Broken glass is fixed with nailed boards, e.g., which simply don't keep the heat in. There are several we'd like to assist with this as we did last Winter.

### **General- improving toilet and washing facilities**



Outside, hole-in-the-ground toilets are difficult for young families at the best of times, but at temperatures of down to -40 degrees in much of the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe, it really becomes a problem- not least because of the slippery nature of the ice which develops around them. To provide inside toilets is a major job but there are "dry" toilets which can be used and which we provided some with last Winter.

### **General- renovation of wells**



The dramatic climate changes of recent years in Eastern Europe have meant that many wells have dropped in their level. Lower temperatures in Winter have also meant that wells are freezing. Re-boring is very expensive and difficult but local tradesmen can be brought in to fix some of them, provide longer chains and pour a mild salt additive into the well which stops the freezing.