

Winter Heating Project: Further Update December 2005

As most carelink readers are aware, thanks to your generosity we're in the process of addressing the very real needs of brethren and sisters in need this Winter, living either in cold and damp accomodation in rural areas, or unable to pay heating in apartments in urban areas. We're happy to report on a visit from Br Roger & Sis Sue Fellows of the UK, who have a remarkable ability to do all kinds of things in the area of housing repairs. We're ever so grateful to them for their time and huge effort made. On arrival they were able to witness the baptism of LENA in Riga, and then to attend our Tuesday evening seminars in Riga, based around the Speaking ABout Jesus course. There is still an excellent attendance, the majority of the 55 people who first attended are still coming, others have joined, and some are attending our Sunday meetings. Roger and Sue also met sis Lilija, who lives in the women's shelter in Riga, and were able to hear first hand of the awful situation there.

We then went on to address a number of heating problems in rural Latvia. This involved distributing warm clothes to those in remote areas, many kilometres walk from the nearest shop.



Distributing clothes [and fresh supplies of Bible Basics]

We were also able to provide firewood:



Firewood in rural Latvia

The problem is that many who formerly lived on the Soviet-era collective farms were given parcels of land, on which they are subsistence farmers. They have had to build what they can as accomodation, and the elderly or those sisters living alone or abandoned by their partners in such accomodation are in a very bad way.

Windows are often held within wrotting frames, aggravated by sinking foundations which causes the surrounding brickwork to crack, thus creating drafts. One short term thing we were able to do was to fit draft excluders. You'll note that in some homes, even indoors people wear hats, coats and scarves



Sue with draft excluders, and fitting them

Sis Svetlana's home was quickly built on land once part of the old Soviet era collective farm. She lives with her family including two young children in a home that is falling down. There is a huge hole in the roof, the windows are draughty, and the floor has started to collapse into the cellar beneath. Because of the inadequate floor and foundations, damp is rising up in the walls, making a very unhealthy environment for two young children of 2 and 4 years old.



Temperatures go down to -30 degrees here

Roger, Sue and Janis worked like trojans to lay a new floor in the home, and to set up the underpinning of the foundations.



Wet walls and a new floor and insulation going in

One other good thing done was that Roger and Sue explained to the local brother and sisters how to actually do some practical things relating to fixing up windows and some structural things, leaving tools and materials for them to do this.



Laying the new floor- note the damp walls



We also inserted some form of insulation against the rising damp



Sue explaining to Nina how to seal windows

One of the real problems in these areas is rural isolation. The family live many kilometres from any tarmaced road or bus service, have no sewage or running water, and just a dog to protect them. Access to medical care is therefore limited by the isolation alone. It takes a couple of hours to walk to the nearest tarmac road and bus service, which is no fun through deep snow with two young children. We were able to take them in to the nearest doctor to get some vaccinations against the flu epidemic.



The children taken to the doctor

Our sisters and brother helped, along with their families, are truly, truly grateful for what was done. We thank you too for your loving support that has enabled this wonderful project, which has made a real, actual, concrete difference already to the lives of some of our Father's faithful sons and daughters and their children.

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM