

Winter Heating Update, December 2005

We're delighted to report an excellent response to our appeal for support of very needy brethren and sisters in Eastern Europe and the former USSR to face the upcoming Winter. Thanks are being sent by those supported to those who have helped them. The Winter is only 2 months underway, and support work will continue until April, God willing, so be patient if you've not yet received your thank you letter.

We'd like to report on one very moving case. We reported the baptism of Sis Ludmila in March this year. She has no relatives, and lives with her dog in a dilapidated home at the very end of a poor village in southern Russia, near Chechnaya. She is one of the few ethnic Russians and Christians in the village. She has to walk several kilometres over tracks to the nearest shop, and has totally nobody to look after her. She is a dwarf and growing weaker with age all the time. Since her baptism, she's been even more picked on by her nearest neighbours, who released their dog onto her. Drunk Moslems have smashed her windows and threatened her. There are no telephones around and she has nobody to trust in but the Lord. Thieves cut off her bucket chain from which she drags water from her well. They then cut down her electricity wires to sell for the metal. Unclaimed trees providing firewood are cut down every Winter, and it's harder and harder for her to find firewood. Her isolation and having no human helper is really terrible. But truly she is strong in faith, reading the Bible daily and rejoicing in the Lord. The population is declining dramatically, and in the 9 months since our last visit we noticed houses had been abandoned even in that period. Typically those who remain grab all the doors, window frames etc. and burn them as firewood.



Abandoned house in the village- Ludmila predicted that soon the shutters would be taken off and burnt and the trees cut down within the next few weeks

We were able to assist her in getting electricity laid back on, and getting an electric cooker so that she doesn't have to scavenge for firewood any more. There had been heavy snow, but just before we arrived the temperature rose and it melted, leaving mud everywhere. The day we left, the temperature fell to -12 degrees centigrade [i.e. 12 below zero].



Ludmila with her cooker and some warm clothes

We also gave clothes and gave funds for some repairs and coal to be delivered by tractor, as it's so hard for her to find firewood. Our sister can walk OK but tires easily. She carries a stick with her to defend her against dogs which the neighbours set on her.



Sis Ludmila with her stick

We had a narrow miss from one such beast on our way there. To avoid that particular dog on the walk back, Ludmila escorted us on a long detour which she usually takes.

Our sister has a wonderful spirit; she looks forward only to the Lord's return, and hopes that if He delays, she will die suddenly rather than waste away to death with nobody to help her. We undertook to try to find her alternative accommodation. Her other hope is that she might yet be able to share the knowledge of the Truth with others in the village. And she's succeeded in one case. There is one old woman of 82, her husband died long ago, her one son was killed in Afghanistan. She is blind and has nobody to look after her, and is too weak to do anything. Ludmila devotes herself to going in each day and looking after her. She walks a few km. there, skirting the evil dogs of various other homesteads, and reads the daily Bible readings to her, and some parts from Bible Basics and other literature. She shares with her all the news about the brotherhood which she receives, and had told her about the Iranian brethren, for whom the two of them pray each day. It was a wonderful privilege to be able to baptize TATYANA in sure hope of the Kingdom. She longs only to be with the Lord. She has nothing left to hope for much. Ludmila feels she must stay in the village, as she put it, until either Jesus comes or Tatyana dies. We were able to give funds for Ludmila to buy some heating materials and other things for our sister. Tatyana was totally in tears of gratitude for the money and heater.



Sis Ludmila with the funds gratefully received



Tears of gratitude from Sis Tatyana, and Sis Ludmila comforting Sis Tatyana. Tatyana was totally overcome by God's grace, in not only showing her the Truth and the Hope of eternity in her last years, but in providing for her heating needs this Winter

Such sisters are the poor of this world, rich in faith, for whom the Kingdom is surely the inheritance they can look forward to. It is a privilege to be able to work with them, and to share with them your support. So please remember our blind sister Tatyana and our dwarf sister Ludmila as they live their lives so alone in that desolate place amidst such opposition.

Your brothers and sisters of CCM