

## Winter Welfare, China, Haiti February 2010

According to the Bible Companion reading tables, Psalm 90 is in the readings for this Sunday, and there's a Bible study on this theme at [www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/ps90.mp3](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/ps90.mp3)

### CHINA

Our brother Donald reports the successful follow up on a contact who had come to us after searching for Christ in Christianity, but concluding that the trinity was a seriously wrong conception of Him. Donald travelled some way to baptize our new brother and writes:

"I baptized our new brother Da as he wished. Before baptism, I used the *Bible Basics* to go through with him a brief outline of what the Bible teaches. At the end, we had a nice moment when we spoke about Jesus personally. How we have to commit to Him, confess our sins, asking forgiveness from God through Him, asking Jesus to come into our minds. We thanked God and Him for it all. We rejoiced that we shall have eternal life here on earth forever through baptism and living in Him. So we concluded: "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"(Matthew 6 v10). We discussed about the problem of the Trinity belief in China. Most Christian people here habitually call both Christ and God with the word SHEN in Chinese, confusing Christ with God. We discussed this on the basis of Bible Basics study 8. I had sent him some very long articles by internet about the error of the Trinity [one is at <http://carelinks.net/doc/zhtrinity> ] . Amen".

### HAITI

The marquee / tents we sent are still being held in Customs but the local brethren have now got onto their location and we've sent funds over to clear the customs demands. Ridiculous demands and corruption appear at every corner. Brother Esmath really deserves congratulation on the amazing effort he is making to teach and comfort so many people at the ecclesial meetings. Another visit is being planned and we look forward to meeting the growing number of people who are interested in baptism. Most of them were interested even before the earthquake. Esmath has put us into contact with a builder who has done contracts for USAID; he is willing to build a toilet block [latrines] and washbasins for US\$ 2000 [about AU\$ 2300, 1500 Euros, 1300 GBP]. We are in direct contact with the builder by phone and email. The toilets and washbasins would benefit not only the ecclesial members who are living under canvass at Brother Esmath's cousin's property, but also the local community around. We are sending a lot of funds out to Haiti for various needs, thank God that Western Union is working so we can get the funds out there. Any interested in funding the latrines are welcome to donate. Some of the brethren however have returned to their village homes in the mountains. One has access to the internet occasionally, and here's part of a chat session he had with Br Charlie Klennert who's coordinating our Carelinks relief efforts in Haiti:

Charlie: hello my brother how are you. this is charlie. are you and the group still living in the mountains?

Fendy: I am fine in the name of the name of the Lord, and you?

Charlie: I am good

Fendy : yes.

Charlie: esmath told us there are some who want to be baptised that are staying with you

Fendy : exactly!

Charlie: Well how great that is!

Fendy : the word of God has penetrated to their heart to start a new life with Jesus.. the tents were transported by boat?

Charlie: um, not sure how they got there. the only transport service is through DHL. they are in customs right now

Fendy : we know that God has a plan for each one of us.

Charlie: He does, He desires us all to be His children... how long does the rainy season last?

Fendy: it's just started.

Charlie: oh ok. that must be tough, do you have cover at nightz?

Fendy : not really.

Charlie: that must be rough....

Fendy : sometimes we are sleeping on the benches.

Charlie: benches...

Fendy : after the rain.

Charlie: how many people are with you in the mountains

Fendy : I don't count.

Charlie: that many. wow. do you and esmath talk much?

Fendy : yes.

Charlie: Well that is good. he sure keeps on preaching, that is amazing

Fendy : the only thing we get in mind is that the Lord will never leave us for so long.

Charlie: that is good. right on, you both are doing a great work

Fendy : thanks.

Charlie: amen

Fendy : and we have to

Charlie: it has to help keep your mind off of everything. How are you doing mentally?

Fendy : when I think about this tragedy its traumatized me, sometimes i'm feeling myself. and sometimes I pray the Lord to help break through this.

Charlie: God will guide you and be a source of strength to you. You are not alone, there are people all over the world praying for you all.....

Fendy : yes it is. your prayers will help a lot.

Charlie: Let me know what needs you all have

Fendy : foods, tents and prayer.

Charlie: makes sense. can you buy food in haiti, or even tents?

Fendy : the tents are very expensive, but we can buy food.

Whilst the media has moved on from the Haiti tragedy, let's remember that at least 230,000 died in a small area, 1.2 million are sleeping outside still, large numbers are ill, and there's total economic and physical destruction. We remind you of the gripping photos brother Esmath sent us which are at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/images/earthquake2010.ppS>

## **WINTER WELFARE**

The Haiti tragedy tends to overshadow all else, but this Winter is one of the hardest yet faced by many of our brethren and sisters in Eastern Europe, and we are distributing aid and funds quite widely. We just had an email from a brother who's a schoolteacher, lamenting that he just got his heating bill and it comes to almost his entire salary. We mourn the falling asleep in Christ of brother Peteris in his remote rural home in Eastern Latvia. Peteris was baptized in 1993 and brought over 20 people to baptism in his time in Christ. Beset by various serious illnesses, the hard Winter was too much for him and he now rests from his labours. Many who have visited Latvia will remember his home, accessible only by tracks and around 7 km from the nearest road and 15 km from the nearest shop.

We'd like to share just one example of many of those whom we are assisting with Winter welfare. PAVEL has been attending our meetings at the Riga Bible Centre for some time and had zealously studied Bible Basics with us. He looked like he lived quite rough but spoke in a very cultured manner and clearly was an educated man. At his baptism, he shared with us his story. Born of a Latvian mother in Russia during the USSR period, he grew up an atheist, became a schoolteacher, and then became editor of a magazine pushing atheism, designed at 're-educating' the Soviet republics of Central Asia which were nominally Moslem and therefore had some resistance to the Soviet doctrine of atheism. He came to realize there is in fact a God, and suffered emotionally a great deal because of this. He lost his job with the collapse of the USSR and found it hard to settle down. He decided to go to Latvia and claim Latvian citizenship, but having surrendered his Russian documents he has found many difficulties in getting Latvian documents. The red tape is massive. Currently he's living in a derelict house in Riga. It really is derelict. To avoid drawing attention to the fact he's living there, he has crafted a zig-zag path through the snow to arrive at the back of the house. He removes a board over a window and climbs in. The house has been derelict for a long time. No glass in the windows and the ceiling collapsed, large holes in the roof. He cooks scraps of food he finds on an open fire and washes using melted snow. He scavenges for food and does odd jobs. He gets a shower once / week at the Salvation Army. Remember the temperature has been -35 degrees at night last month. He wraps himself in blankets as he was taught whilst in the Red Army, in a way which conserves and uses body heat to the most. Like many in true need, he never hinted at wanting any material aid. His knowledge of the Bible is excellent and it was a true joy to baptize this man into the Lord Jesus, whom he has come to know and love. His baptism was a wonderful and appropriate sign of Pavel's true conversion from atheist darkness to God and to His Son. We offered assistance but he is rather proud of how he manages. The worst thing is that the property next door is a part built house with an open basement. Various drug addicts and alcoholics live there, occasionally dying, and the smell from the dead bodies is awful. Pavel's place has a hole in the floor he uses as a toilet, and these miserable neighbours come in and use it, lingering there as it's far warmer than where they are lying, with the snow around them. We gave him blankets loving knitted by sisters in Australia, and other support. We'll also try to expedite his legal process so that he can get documents and start working. Meantime, Pavel is a great fan of daily Bible reading using the Bible Companion. He was given one by someone he met at the Salvation Army but he can't remember who. It was an English one, published by the Gospel Publicity League of Epping NSW Australia. Exactly how it found its way to the Salvation Army in Riga is one of God's mysteries. We'd like to pay tribute to the colossal work done by brothers Charlie French and Graham Bacon over many years, in sending out probably millions of items of literature worldwide.

Pavel may be an extreme case but there are very many other brothers and sisters in varying stages of need. Please continue praying for them and supporting them

Photos below: Toilet shared with the drug addicts and alcoholics next door; the basement where they sleep and die, their mattresses literally in the ice and snow; the collapsed ceiling; Pavel's "kitchen"; Pavel with a parcel of blankets from Australia [the boarded up window through which he enters is on the far left of the photo]



Photos below: Pavel entering through the back window, removing the board over the window, and then saying goodbye to us before replacing the board



Photos below: Pavel's baptism and receiving a Winter welfare package, with hair still wet from baptism; Pavel's Russian Bible Basics and Bible Companion



**With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks**