

Winter Welfare, Haiti, China, Brother Pavel October 2010

This Sunday's Bible readings are from John 9, about the healing of the blind man. There's an MP3 exhortation about this at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/jn9.mp3>

WINTER WELFARE

Sister Tanya wants us to share the following:

"I just wanted to say how thankful I am for being able to pay towards my heating this year. Now the heating season's started, I was so worried for this year. I was trying to get the courage to ask Cindy if there would be help this year, but then Duncan spoke to me and said there would be. Last February, the heating bill was 8 Lats more than my entire pension for the month. In our old blocks, we can't regulate the heating, otherwise of course I would turn it off. It's such a headache for me, I was even worrying over the Summer how ever I would survive this Winter. When I hear the temperature forecast on the radio, I just am thinking what the bill will be for the heating. I meet brothers and sisters who are now living in the night shelters, I dread to think that I would end up in there, but it will happen if I don't pay my heating. With my heart condition, I think I would likely have a heart attack having to be out on the street all day. So I am feeling so relieved, so grateful to God and to you, I just don't know how it would have been otherwise, I even had a nightmare about a night shelter. Thankyou from my heart."

There are many other such testimonies received verbally.

We're pleased to report the baptism and receiving into fellowship of VALDIS at the Riga Bible Centre, and are looking forward to hearing how the local brethren manage running the meetings during Duncan & Cindy's absence.

HAITI

In an article entitled "UN condemned over appalling Haiti refugee camps", the BBC at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11491537> make the allegation that sexual abuse of women is rife in the camps. As we have sisters in the camps, we were concerned at these reports. Brother Charlie Klennert, who has been to Haiti, comments: "I remember a conversation with Brother Esmath about the young sisters. He told me, "What happens in Haiti is quite sad, especially when they are employed, I pray for them daily"... Sitting in the car with 3 brothers, I asked if the government is helping, the response I got was all of them laughing.. With the corrupt governments all over, I truly pray for the return of Christ". We add our prayers on this matter.

CHINA

Bro. Donald has made another journey to baptize one of our contacts- someone else has come from atheism to Christ, and we rejoice in this. He writes:

"GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

I baptized bro Xu at the sauna. He has searched for God for a very long time ,From atheist to Christian. In college he began to study the theory of evolution and Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time". He was fascinated by the thought that as the universe is outwardly expanding now , someone predicted a black hole can exist in the future . But he has always been skeptical of all this. He thought all of the life is too wonderful, too incredible. Are all these theories reasonable? He decided not, and was challenged by the last sentence of the book: "If we find [a unified theory], it would be the ultimate triumph mdash; for then we would know the mind of god". He searched on the internet and came to know about the Creationist viewpoint and also found our websites. Then he met with us and had fellowship with

local bros and sis online. He says that sometimes he also prayed to the Lord, but there was no answering, so He used to doubt the existence of Him. But he grew in faith, and started to think also about Jesus as God's Son. He decided to accept Jesus. In some corner of the mind he felt that there he had Jesus, he thought about Jesus more and more as he read the Bible, and felt that Jesus has changed him. He felt less irritable, arrogant. It was very easy for us to convert him. Now he has decided to give himself completely to be a Christian through baptism , so let's pray for our new bro, giving him confidence in Christ.
God bless"

Photo: Brother Xu [right] just after his baptism



BROTHER PAVEL

Carelinks do a lot of work with alcoholics and their families and we have produced material in several languages.

Brother Pavel has provided the following testimony:

"Duncan is always telling me that what I have gone through is in order to help others, and urges me to write up some of the things God has done for me so as to inspire others, and also as a way for me to make sense of my life and its path. So here I am.

My name is Pavel, I am half Russian and half Latvian, I was born on a farm near the Russian-Latvian border. I became an alcoholic in my teens. I avoided going into the Red Army just because I couldn't imagine how I could survive without drinking for 2 days. Eventually I was caught, and after training was sent to guard the USSR-Chinese border in Kyrgyzstan. I continued drinking. I stole vodka from the officers, then stole antifreeze and drunk that, with the result that we couldn't start our vehicles. I was summoned by the officers and told I would be punished by being sent to a labour camp. But they then offered me an option- if I would inform upon the young conscripts, who was loyal to the party and who wasn't, they'd give me a case of vodka. Alcoholism makes you very cunning. I agreed, but I said that the way to know what people think is to get them drunk, so, they should give me up front one case of vodka, which I would use to get them drunk; and then I'd inform the officers of the state of their loyalty to the party, their attitudes to the West, religion, etc. They agreed. Well I drunk that case of vodka myself; and then I had to report to the officers. I made up nonsense- this one said he's a Christian, this one is against the party, that one says he admires America, that one says Andropov's an alcoholic... It was all untrue but I had to say something. Well the officers believed me and started operating against those men. They seemed to have guessed I was the informer.

I with them were posted on duty to the border. There was a spectacular valley, the Chinese were one side and we were the other side. China and USSR were always somehow suspicious of each other. Their soldiers were up one side of the mountain, and we were the other side of the valley, on the mountains on the Kyrgyz side. We had a tank and observation equipment on a kind of ledge, looking out right over the valley with a sheer drop. Well, one night they accused me of informing on them, and said they would kill me, by throwing me over the edge. They started drinking, there were Kyrgyz peasants who would come around selling us vodka in plastic bags for a few roubles. I have always been scared of heights. They tied me up and were talking of how they would torture me before throwing me over the edge. They started the tank and moved it

forward to the very edge of the ledge. They said I must walk along the gun barrell until I fell off... the barrell was extended right over the sheer drop. I was so frightened, I was crying, and started to desperately pray to God, that He would help me. I tried to remember all I knew or thought I had heard about God, about Jesus, about the Bible. My grandmother had had a Bible, which she used to hide at the back of a cupboard, I had read pages from it from teenage inquisitiveness as a child. I tried to remember what I had read. I begged God to save me, I promised Him my life... But the atheist in me was thinking, well, I don't suppose He will do anything. If He really exists, well I am not worthy of His help anyway. if He exists and does something, moreover for someone like me, who is a sinner, He would be simply so unbelievably gracious and kind.

Then there was a large explosion. The one who had moved the tank forward to the edge of the ledge and extended the gun barrell for me to walk along, had yanked the fire button. He wasn't sober. The shell flew out and exploded in mid air right in the middle of the valley. The whole valley was electric. Our officers immediately contacted us by radio, what had happened, why had we fired, was it a mistake, was there an attack, why had we fired artillery without permission. I later learnt that they had to contact Moscow, who then contacted Peking, to tell the Chinese side not to respond as it was an accident. Anyway, the officers came to us. Of course they found the whole detail drunk- apart from me. They were amazed. That Pavel was the only one sober. I, who had been about to be killed, was suddenly within minutes the one justified and the good guy. The one who had pressed the fire button was sent to a labour camp after his court martial, and all of them were sentenced to hard labour. I cannot explain my feelings of elation and freedom after we returned to base. I kept saying to myself "There IS a God!". But I wanted to know more about Him. I kept asking Him. It seemed strange to me that He had heard my prayer of desperation, but didn't seem to answer my prayer about learning more about Him. But in fact I now realize I needed those 20 years since then, to be prepared to learn about God, and then finally He brought me into contact with *Bible Basics* and then the *Riga Bible Center*, I got baptized, all now makes sense. That God who saved me on that mountainside on the Kyrgyzstan border... He is the God of Israel, the one God not three, the Father of Jesus; He saves not just from death now, but from eternal death through His Son, our representative, who knew fear and panic as I did that night; He who shall come again to begin God's Kingdom on earth. I hope I shall stand with Him one day on that mountainside, some point during His Kingdom. I say again, as I did that night: "There IS a God! There IS Jesus!" And I want the world to know that".

Carelinks Australia Conference- last minute!

Seeing God at Work

On Sat 16th Oct

At the Hurstville Hall

Cnr Myall St and Boundary Rd, Oatley

Starting at 5 p.m.

More details at <http://carelinks.org/doc/events>

With love from your brothers and sisters at Carelinks