

Russian Bible School, Jan. 2005

There was a wonderful response to our requests to sponsor Russian speaking brethren and sisters to attend the Winter Bible School. Both they and we the organizers are really so grateful to all of you who contributed. And because of so much prayerful support, we believe that there was indeed a special blessing upon this gathering. Our speakers were from all over the world- Brother Bruce Parker from USA, Brother Dave Bushell from England, and Brother Mike Floyd from South Africa. Over 50 brethren and sisters gathered together at a location near Kazan, Russia. Some had travelled for three days to be present. For many, this is the highlight of their year. Many from their poverty paid towards their own fares. This was particularly encouraging. We invited those who had completed both Introducing Bible Basics and Bible Basics and completed preliminary discussions about baptism, to also attend. It's more economic and better all around to gather these people together for a week with local brethren and sisters, than travel the length and breadth of this vast country to visit individuals.

We're delighted to announce the baptisms of 6 people at the Bible School: IRINA, OLEG, VALERIJ, VALYA, GALINA and SOFIA. They gave excellent confessions of their faith, having been in touch with us for some time. Sis. Sofia had even read and answered all the questions in Beyond Bible Basics! There was a very happy session of greetings and breaking of bread after their baptisms. Bro. Duncan gave an exhortation about 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever'; and it was a great encouragement to reflect how several of the brethren and sisters present had been attending Russian Bible Schools for ten years. Clearly there are developing true bonds of friendship, inter-marriage between families, and true fellowship; Christadelphians are here in Russia to stay, by God's grace!

Photos:



Brethren Dave, Mike and Bruce very happy after the successful interview of Galina



Mike and Vanessa [from South Africa] share a very emotional moment with Sofia after she'd completed her interview with flying colours. In these moments one sees the wonderful reality of our world-wide fellowship in Christ

For many, this Bible School was a true oasis. Sis. V came, bringing with her her Bible, which her husband had bored needles into in hatred, piercing the thick cover and many pages. She eagerly took notes throughout the talks, seeking strength with which to return to a very difficult and dangerous domestic situation.

Photo:



Sis. V. with her pierced Bible

Another brother who attended at the last minute for some days was our beloved young brother Leonid. Carelink readers will be aware of the dramas he's endured regarding military service. He's been posted to hard work in a factory with much pressure upon him to give up alternative service and go into the army. The factory's not re-started working yet after the Christmas break. So he was able to come to be with us for a few days. He lapped up everything he could, and went away with many prayers for him.

Photo:



Bro Leonid taking strength from the word

Cindy had gathered some glasses together of various prescriptions. Many of our brethren and sisters can't afford to pay for health care, and spectacles can cost two months' pension. The glasses collected were accepted with great enthusiasm and gratitude. If anyone can obtain spectacles, whether or not they can know the strength of the lenses, they are welcome to get them to Marcus & Gwladys Heaster in the UK, Mike & Vanessa Floyd in South Africa, or Robin & Steve Jones in Australia. They can be put to good use here in Eastern Europe.

Photos:



A brother singing a hymn, having to hold his glasses at a distance in order to read small print.



Distributing spectacles at the Bible School

It's easy to underestimate the problem of distance in a region as vast as the former USSR. Many family members are scattered between the former republics of the USSR and rarely if ever meet each other. The Bible Schools are a great opportunity for faithful families to meet with each other. A beautiful example is in the way Brother Boris, from Russia, was able to come to the Bible School and meet his sister Sofia, who lives in the Ukraine. It was so wonderful to hear her confession of faith, to witness her baptism, and to hear her stand up and give thanks to her

brother Boris for leading her to the Truth. They're both in their 70s and very frail, and had made a great effort to get there. Sofia travelled for 2 days, slept on a railway station clutching her stick, and gave out 50 Bible Basics leaflets on the train!

Photo:



Brother Boris, from Russia, was able to come to the Bible School and meet his sister Sofia, who lives in the Ukraine

And then there was brother Valera, from the very far north of Russia. He lives in a truly isolated village near the Arctic Circle. He has few people to talk to, let alone share his many ideas about the Bible with. The daily Bible reading sessions were an opportunity for him to enthusiastically share with us his many questions and Biblical researches.

Photo:



Brother Valera contributing his comments on the daily readings

Another innovation this year was having a sisters' class and a brethren's class. Sis. Ludmila ably led the sisters in an illustrated study of the wilderness journey, and Bro. Bruce spoke to the brethren about brethren's issues.

Photos:



Sis. Ludmila leading the sisters' class



Bro. Bruce leading the brethren's class

We're seeking to develop a sisters' class movement in Eastern Europe, as there are so many sisters. We hope to soon be making an announcement about this. We're already looking forward to sponsoring brethren and sisters to attend further Bible Schools. We'd welcome hearing from any from the West who'd like to attend these Schools. As Bruce, Mike, Vanessa and Dave can testify, these are unusually special occasions, where the spirit of Christ is evident.

Your brethren and co-workers of CCM

