

CBM East Europe Newsletter

Number 25 January 2011

Although this newsletter contains mostly reports of visits to CBM territories, there is, of course a great deal else that goes on to support our preaching and pastoral work in Eastern and Central Europe.

For example, Bro David Pearce runs a regular online Bible Class, which people take part in through using Skype – a free online telephone and video-conferencing facility that works over the Internet.

The Internet also generates contacts from our websites (a list of them can be found on the Links page of www.cbmeasteurope.info). Contacts are followed up with emails and Bible resources.

Literature and books are translated and made available. Information about the available literature for each country can be found on www.cbm.org.uk The Bible Reading Planner has been translated into several languages and sent to contacts. CIL papers are adapted and translated into Russian and other languages before being distributed.

Normal postage and telephone calls enable us to keep in contact with brothers and sisters and contacts – but require a great deal of time and commitment. With many of the people we contact living in isolation, it is important that they feel in touch and have a sense of support, such as we would expect to find in an ecclesia anywhere in the world.

Bulgaria

Visit to Sofia by Peter & Lorraine Eichhorn - July-August 2010

We met Bro Goran from Serbia, who had set off from his village at 2 am to spend the most time with his brothers and sisters. We took a taxi to Lulin to meet with Sis Lina. After spending the afternoon together, we travelled back to the ecclesial flat, where Goran was to stay with Bro Assen.

Saturday

Bro Godson arrived and as most people were available on Saturday, we combined a Breaking of Bread in the morning with a Bible study in the afternoon. Twelve people heard Pete exhort on the theme that Jesus is the only one for salvation. We remembered Sis Sue Hardy and prayed for her health. We then shared a lunch of pizzas and salads, with various Bulgarian delicacies provided by the brothers and sisters.

After lunch we held two study sessions on the theme of Elijah the prophet. A number of brethren and sisters shared the Readings and translated for one another. Our newly baptised sis Lucy was there for the day and a visitor, Ekaterina, who had been to Bible School, came for the afternoon sessions.

Sunday

Sis Janet had invited members for lunch at her house on Vitosha mountain. It was a very

enjoyable time together, with everyone sharing in the making of a meal. Pete was able to talk a little to Michael, the husband of Sis Gabi.

We felt that the weekend had been successful in bringing together members of the ecclesia and drawing them all closer together as an ecclesia.

Visit to Sofia by Mike & Sue Hardy - October 2010

We were met by Sis Lina and taken to ecclesial apartment, where we spent the evening with her. Thirteen adults and three children were present at the Breaking of Bread the next morning. Mike exhorted on the theme, 'Anxiety' from 1 Kings 19 and Matthew 6.

An interesting and animated discussion followed. Afterwards everyone stayed and shared a meal together. The atmosphere of friendship and obvious enjoyment of fellowship is a welcome and heart-warming contrast to the early days of the ecclesia.

The following two days were spent with Sisters Liulin and Eli. We also met Bro Lyuben and held a Breaking of Bread service as some members had been away on the Sunday. Mike exhorted on 'Christ in You' and this was followed by a lively discussion around 2 Corinthians 13:5: 'What is the test?'

Estonia

Bible Weekend led by Peter & Lesley Craddock and Chris & Margaret Howard – September 2010



Six residential and five non-residential adults attended along with two interpreters and two children, sharing a fruitful time of acquaintance, friendship and developing fellowship. The theme of the weekend was 'The Bible, a Book for Today' - an overview of the scriptures, the settings and grouping of the books and the cohesion of the Old and New Testaments. Ample time was allowed for discussion and questions. Hand-outs and flip chart sketches by Chris made the sessions less formal. Everyone was satisfied and hoped we would do something like it again. While we were disappointed that more of our contacts and brothers and sisters did not attend, the weekend was a success both in participation in the studies and in the sharing of friendship and fellowship.

Visit by Mike & Sis Gill Roberts – November 2010

Tallinn



Studies were well attended. Nine people came to the flat and were very interested in our Christadelphian history. Several felt it filled in gaps for them about why we are different. On the next day there was an excellent turnout of 19 contacts (including 2 new ones), 3 brethren; 1 sister and 2 interpreters. Most joined in reading and discussing the characteristics of the man/woman of God.



Tartu



The meeting was attended by just two sisters and two contacts who all took part in reading and



discussion on the Titus study. Sis Leili and Tiina are both happy to go to Tallinn for another Bible study weekend.

Viljandi

We enjoyed a good discussion with an elderly couple. Our interpreter joined in the discussion with questions of her own.

Pärnu

Sis Kaie was keen to spend time with us on both days but Sis Tanya was unwell. We had a Breaking of Bread with Kaie on Tuesday afternoon and she came to the Bible Class on Wednesday.

Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia

Visit by Michael & Richmal Owen, Amy Owen and Debbie Booth – September 2010

Croatia

Sis Anita and her mother were in good heart and we were delighted that her mother did the daily Readings with us, stating afterwards that she had found a sense of peace and spiritual benefit from this.



We met up with Bro Darko and Zeljka, who were hoping to find new accommodation to live in and for Darko's glass business. We spent time around the Readings and Zeljka told us she wanted to continue with the 18-lesson course but does not have the time for it at the moment.



Bro Ivan welcomed us with his grandson, Luka, a student. Ivan likes to talk about current affairs. We did the Readings together, followed by a Breaking of Bread. Luka listened

respectfully and said he was pleased to see how we did things. He said that Ivan always talks to him about the Bible.

Serbia

About 14 people, mostly women, attended three 1-hour seminars. We used material from the 'Learn to Read the Bible Effectively' seminars to give an overview of the Bible and to stimulate Bible study. I recognised a number of the contacts from my visit in March and they proved a receptive audience. In Indija we saw two contacts, Nenad and Schatzi, who are very appreciative of our Bible-based approach.

We broke bread with Bro William and Sis Sladjana and Bro Zoltán on the Sunday. After lunch we met up with a contact who had requested copies of the Hungarian version of 'Exploring the Bible'. She attends a small Pentecostal style group in her home town and another larger group in Subotica. We answered her questions about our beliefs.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Sarajevo

We delivered two talks on subjects suggested by Dzenan: 'The Real Truth about the Bible' and 'Great



Men of Faith'. The numbers attending were smaller than usual – perhaps because the invitations were given

out too far in advance. However, we spent valuable time each day with Dzenan

and Medina, doing the daily Readings and discussing many issues. We also had good contact with Medina and Dzenan's families.



Banja Luka

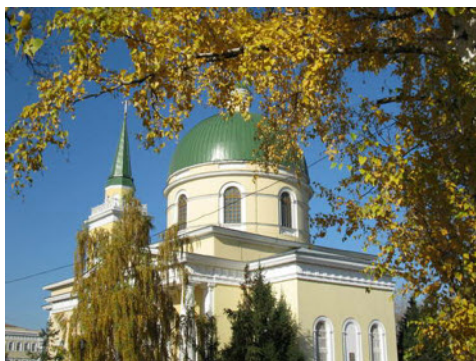
Dzenan and Armin came with us to Banja Luka, where we were almost overwhelmed with the response. We had advertised 'Great Men of Faith' by means of 8000 flyers placed in the Glas Srpske newspaper. The room was completely full, with 30 visitors. They took a lot of Bible literature away with them at the end and many left their names and addresses for further contact.

Russia

Visit to Omsk and Tomsk by David & Kathryn Pearce - October 2010

In Moscow we met Bro Emmanuel and passed on some warm winter clothes donated by a sister. The overnight flight then dropped us onto the chilly morning tarmac at Omsk in Siberia. After a few hours sleep to recover, we joined up with Bro Rinat and Sis Marina, our translators.

A cheerful crowd of 26 Kazak brothers and sisters spilled onto the Omsk station forecourt, and we all boarded the ancient, creaking bus for our forest retreat. The weekend was to be spent on the Epistle to the Romans, with Kathryn taking the children's classes on Noah.



We explained the pressure on the CBM budgets.

Next year we have to reorganise what we provide for brothers and sisters. The

Kazaks said they would be grateful for whatever we can provide for them.

After the weekend we were able to visit Bro Victor and Sis Larisa in their cottage. They had missed the weekend because their daughter was very ill, so they were glad to catch up on the news.



From Omsk we trained eastwards to Novosibirsk, third largest city in Russia. Here Sis Kathryn had a student from ThisisyourBible.com whom we met last May.

Our last venue was Tomsk, where there is a lively ecclesia group of sixteen. This involved a four hour bus journey ever eastwards over an exceedingly bumpy road. Our weekend was based on the life of David, and the amazing Old Testament prophecies of the events in the life of Jesus. We were impressed when the brothers and sisters announced that they had already saved up the equivalent of one third of the cost of the weekend.



Visit to St Petersburg and Moscow by Iain MacDonald, Tim Collard and Igor Podgaisky - October 2010

In St Petersburg we met Igor with Natasha, Roman and Omoh (an African brother who was baptised at the Summer Bible School in Kazan, having made first contact with us through the thisisyourbible.com website). We did the Readings in Iraida's flat and exhorted on preaching and the little maid's example in Naaman's house. We had a slideshow and some good discussion on campaigns, the Bible Exhibition and ecclesial roles and responsibilities.

We also had a meeting with Sis Lyudmila and her husband, who seemed inquisitive to join the group as a silent bystander.

Maksatikha

We met Bro Gennady and Sis Nina. Nina had several Bible questions ready for us and we did the daily Readings together.

Fellowship in Moscow

We met several brothers and sisters, did the daily Readings, broke bread together and considered Bible prophecy – Nebuchadnezzar's image, and Israel's scattering and re-gathering.

Belarus

Visit by Mark Whittaker, Paul Dredge and Viktor Sluczewski – October 2010

We met up with 13 of the 2 dozen or so committed brothers and sisters in the country, and enjoyed good discussion and fellowship with all these. We provided funding for an electric wheelchair for a disabled brother, for an eye operation for one of our most faithful brothers and to bring back from hospital a sister who had been recovering from a broken bone.

Minsk

The Readings, Breaking of Bread and study workshops we carried out worked well, and all brothers stayed overnight afterwards, allowing the fellowship to continue for longer than usual.



During the afternoon, Leonid went out to meet a colleague of Oleg's and began discussions about the Bible. This was a very positive sign of personal preaching.

Further afield

We visited a number of contacts and brothers and sisters in a variety of places. One highlight was the visit to Marietta, who was delighted to see us and after a meal and Breaking of Bread offered to put us up for the night. Not only this, but Marietta confirmed a willingness to host future meetings in either her flat or dacha (just outside Minsk), which will save us having to find an apartment to hire every visit.

Our final day was spent travelling to visit Sis Danita, who had permission to see visitors in a school-room at the small school (56 pupils) she works at. We were able to read and break bread.

South Russia

Visit by Stas & Ksenya Sedov-Seversk, Kevin Rawlings and Tim Yearsley - October 2010



We drove for an hour to see an Esperanto student in contact with Bro David Budden. We were given a warm welcome by Aleksandar and his wife and

spent a couple of hours with them, but it was more a meeting of friendship than one of a spiritual meeting of minds.

We took our leave late in the afternoon to enable us to drop in on bro Dima and sis Natasha Krassavin from Seversk who were holidaying in the area. It was good to meet them/rekindle friendship and confirm they



would visit us in Kransodar later in the week. As it was getting late we took our leave and drove on to Gelendzhik.

Gelendzhik

Sis Viktoria had arranged for us to rent a room off her landlords - a Baptist couple. We arrived at 21:00 and enjoyed a meal together with Sis



Viktoria and our hosts. Discussions extended into the night, but it was only the Russians who were able to continue the dialogue until 02:00. The next day we shared a Breaking of Bread with sis Viktoria. She also has her mother staying with her in the same room, bed bound and not at all well. We saw her briefly, but she didn't have the strength for us to visit for long. Sis Viktoria is also struggling with her health.

Aktyrskij

We arrived around mid-day and having arrived at the house of Bro Alexander & Sis Irina found the house empty despite Sis Irina promising to be there to meet us that morning. We managed to "bump into" Bro Alexander who was waiting for his lift back to work. He had not been expecting us, and told us that Sis Irina was at work. Communication had broken down somewhere, but we were glad to have spoken to Bro Alexander if only briefly.

Krasnodar

Bro Dima & Sis Natasha joined us for the evening and we enjoyed many a cup of tea over the Readings and hymn singing.

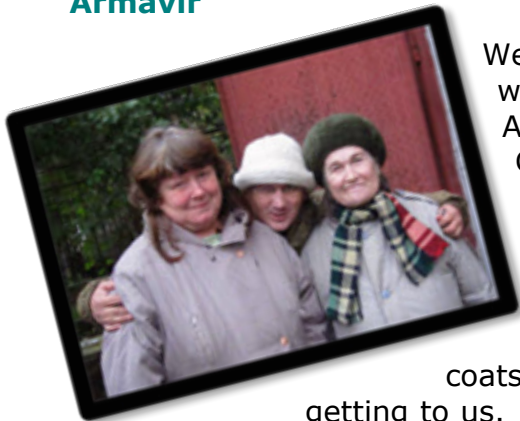
Sovietskaya



We visited Bro Vyacheslav and his lovely family including his wife sis Nina, his mother, Sis Vera.

and 5 children (the eldest of whom, Snezhanna is also baptised). Our time with them involved Bible Readings and charades with the children. It became clear that Vyacheslav believes in a personal devil though he understands Christadelphian teaching. Despite a long discussion in which his mother defended the scriptural position he maintained his view. His wife Nina and eldest daughter Snezhanna have both been baptised, but did not get involved in the discussion at all. The 12 year old daughter Yana on the other hand read beautifully and is clearly learning a lot.

Armavir



We were warmly welcomed by Alexsi, Vera and Galina and commenced doing the Bible Readings together, but even with coats on the cold was getting to us. It was clear the

dacha had been poorly maintained with pillows in the windows to keep out the drafts. We found some plastic sheeting and Bro Stas dutifully spent the afternoon installing it. Meanwhile we continued discussing the Readings and shared in Breaking of Bread.

One of the girls in the newspaper office requested the correspondence course and several extra for her friends.

In the afternoon we spent a really encouraging afternoon with Bro Robert, a very committed student of the scriptures. He has obviously spent hours reading, and has also built up a detailed understanding of Protestant denominations including SDA, JW and Baptists. He has completed the full correspondence course and the follow up Way of Life course. We pray he remains strong despite his isolation.



Volgograd

Bro Viktor and sis Galina met with us at our hotel. Bro Victor was quite a story teller, relating his experiences of life in Ukraine in WW2, his role as a Communist Party factory manager, his horticulture, poetry and music. Eventually managed to prise him away from his stories to enjoy the Readings together.



Volgodonsk

We had some time available and took the opportunity to place a couple of newspaper advertisements.

Czech Republic

Visit by David Dunstan and Adrian Triggs - October 2010

We held a public talk in Budějovická. The subject was 'The first century church – real Christianity in action' and Jana translated. Despite Martin having sent out handwritten

invitations to the usual contacts, there were only 3 visitors (including Zdeněk, who showed a lot of interest), as well as Sisters Eva and Miluše. We also planned a Bible Reading Group, but no one came. Martin was still ill and Eva had her son at home for a few hours; but more importantly there were no contacts. This is probably because the habit of meeting regularly has been broken by a long summer gap, and because of the changed circumstances of the contacts. It will take a sustained effort to get the group running again.

Sisters in Moravia

We picked up the car, Jana and Miluše and went to see and break bread with Sis Jarmila in Svratouch. She was in great spirits and in much better health than when we saw her last year. She made us lunch and we spent 3 hours with her. It was good that Miluše came too (her own idea) – both for the sisters and for her.

Then we continued to Nový Jičín where we stayed the night before visiting Sis Dagmar. She too was well – better than last year – and after breaking bread we went for lunch at the nearby restaurant.

As usual, Jana was a brilliant translator. At the age of 28, she is doing well at her job and has now moved into her own flat. It was good to see that she wouldn't take all the money I offered her for translating, because we had paid for her hotel.

Breaking of Bread in Prague

We broke bread with Martin and Eva. Martin explained how he was overwhelmed with the responsibility of taking over from Miloš, just after his baptism in May. Eva now looks after the flat and seems very pleased to do it. We took Eva to lunch at the Puškin, which allowed us to get to know her better.

Macedonia

Visit by Roger & Celia Griffiths with Marko Popovski – October 2010

We decided to put less emphasis on billing and more on posters. We took 20 posters printed on different brightly coloured paper for each location, and left them up, with two website addresses on them.



A public talk was given in Skopje on the day of arrival, and a previous contact brought two new visitors, making a total of seven visitors. We then went to Kicevo for the weekend, to concentrate on the two brothers and one sister, and the regular contact. We broke bread, had an exhortation, and a Bible study.

TV advertising

At Prilep two talks were given to existing contacts. When we arrived at Strumica we discovered that the printer had not printed the bills, so we put out the posters and then went to Radovis, the next town, to deliver bills and put out posters. We also visited an existing contact, Dragica, at her place of work. At Radovis, the Cultural Centre manager suggested Bro Marko visited the local TV station, where he took a two-line teletext advert for the day for £3! At least three visitors came as a result, and Marko is going to investigate this form of publicity further. Altogether seven visitors came, raising hopes for the future.



We billed "Exploring the Bible" invitations in Kocani on the way to Probistip, where existing contacts came to the talk. We spent another fellowship weekend in Kicevo before leaving for home, with Breaking bread, an exhortation, and another Bible study.



Bro Jacek had the good idea of translating two of our hymns so we could sing them at the Breaking of Bread. He also translated everything from English into Polish and vice versa whenever needed.

We enjoyed some local walks which gave us the opportunity to chat with our members and friends and get to know them better.

It was a lovely weekend, beneficial to both the English and the Polish, and one that we hope to repeat again next year God willing.



We had time to discuss the way forward with Bro Marko, including making use of the local TV, which serves Strumica as well as Radovis. We talked about adapting the "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively" seminar, introducing it with "The Bible in an Hour".



Poland
Visit by Mark & Ruth Basten, Peter Hale, Graham Parker, Gemma Taylor and Abigail Hardy – November 2010

 **Christadelphian Bible Mission**

This newsletter, along with previous newsletters, can be downloaded from the Christadelphian Bible Mission East European Committee's website: www.cbmeasteurope.info Visit the website for more frequent updates of activities and for general information about the work of the CBM East Europe Committee. Information is also published on the main CBM website www.cbm.org.uk and in "The Bible Missionary". To receive an alert about significant updates and the latest newsletter, send a request to: Michael Owen - michael.owen42@btinternet.com

Newsletter design by Kinnor Wroughton



Fourteen of us assembled in Poznan for a weekend of varied studies, as requested by our Polish brothers and sisters. We also had a profitable question and answer session. Most of them could speak English which meant it was easy to chat through issues with them.



EMBLEMS IN ARMAVIR

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"