

Afghanistan News August 2004

A brief visit was made to Afghanistan, in order to try to get our brother K from Pakistan asylum there, to visit our brethren, shattered as they are after the brutal murder of Brother Faris by his father in law, and also to meet with some contacts we have there.

The security situation here in the world's most dangerous country has seriously deteriorated. Anti-Western, Islamic fundamentalist groups are controlling much of the country and there is open warfare, much de-emphasized in Western reporting. Things were especially tense as an election is coming up in September, God willing. Br D arrived at the airport to be met by the prospect of a crowd of long bearded, turban wearing guys who claimed to be taxi drivers. Not liking the prospect of jumping in a car with them, he hung around inside the terminal building for about two hours. The hotel we'd booked, and where we were to meet the contacts and brethren, had assured us that they would send their pick up and bodyguard to collect us; but nobody showed up. Eventually D asked a soldier to find a safe taxi, and he obliged. He told the driver to take him to the hotel we had booked. They got there to find there had been a major bomb blast just 2 hours before... the road was sealed off, buildings and shop fronts were in ruins, and military were everywhere. This was why their pick up hadn't come. If he'd have left the airport on arrival, he'd have been there just when the blast happened. And if Br K had arrived from Pakistan 2 days earlier, as he had planned initially, he'd have likely been there at the time. We give thanks for these and many other deliverances.

The taxi took D to another hotel, located opposite the newly opened "Emergency Surgical Centre for war Victims". It was a sad sight, watching relatives bringing in wounded family members, often in the infamous yellow taxis, which they had had to arrange themselves. In the photo you may just be able to see the feet protruding from the end of a stretcher- the trunk was left open so the wounded could be laid out in full.

Photos: Emergency Surgery Centre for War Victims; new arrival coming in



D spent 2 days in Afghanistan alone making what contacts he could with the brethren and contacts. Br. K finally arrived after many amazing deliverances. K&D had to walk the streets around the proposed rendezvous, looking for the familiar faces of our brethren. Just walking down the streets around the bombed hotel was quite a job- armed police picked us up at every step, wanting to know why a Pakistani and British national should be so keen to be hanging around a bomb site... We were seeking our brethren, but that just shows how we are fools for Christ's sake in this world. The hard world of Afghanistan can't generally understand the love and care between Christ's true brethren.

We sought to get to Kandahar, where our brother Faris had been slain, and to meet with the other brethren there. The road was closed due to fighting, and the only way down there would have been by military helicopter- little landing pads like the one shown in the photo are

springing up all over the country- or by the UN Humanitarian flights. Neither of these options would take us, so we were left with having to find information from the others in Kabul.

Photo: Helicopter landing pad



What we got confirmed was that Br Faris was slain after his father in law objected to him reading the New Testament each day after his baptism; this was for him the price of doing his readings. We had given him a Dari Bible Companion reading guide at his baptism. We also learn that once his head had been cut off by his father in law, they subsequently cut off his ears and nose. Such is the hatred against those who convert to Christ. This is what the seed of the snake does against the seed of the woman. As and when we all face this, let's remember our brave brother Faris.

Brother K's situation in Pakistan is untenable. He is on the run continually, living in cheap hotels, moving around the country. His photo had been published in a Moslem magazine, along with his mobile number and the address where his wife and children live. He had then fled, but another announcement has been published. He has twice been refused a visa to Australia, despite our brethren there under the co-ordination of Br Steve Cook trying very hard indeed. Now his passport is stamped by the Australians as having been twice refused, it's very hard for him to get into any Commonwealth country.

He has always resisted the idea of seeking asylum, preferring rather to give his life for the spread of the Gospel in Pakistan. However it has become apparent to him that he really will soon be slain if he remains where he is. Conversion from Islam to Christianity is punishable by death, and further, he has been photographed preaching Christianity. He also has 'Islam' written in his passport as his religion, and this can't be changed, as changing religion is a capital offence. So you see the problem- his passport says he is a Moslem but there is evidence from hacked emails and photos that he preaches Christ.

We therefore explored the idea of getting him asylum in Afghanistan; but there is too much in the way of this. For one thing, the tribe he is from are hated in Kabul, and it's really quite dangerous for him to even walk the street. For another, the cost of living in safe accommodation would be exorbitant, and in any case, there is death at every corner in Afghanistan at the moment. And obviously the UNHCR are jammed full of applicants there.

Photo: Outside the rather unhelpful UNHCR base in Kabul



We're therefore prayerfully seeking to find another country where our brother can seek asylum. This is much harder than it sounds. There is an urgent need for prayer and funds to support our brother. We are currently seeking to get him out to a safer country but it's so hard.

We did eventually meet up with contacts, and MOHAMMED and AZAD were baptized. They have written their testimonies of how they came to the truth below. In the course of this, Br. K was

kept hidden [for safety] in a room for four days. We were emailing around prayer requests for him, and were about to report him as a missing person when we received news that he had made it back to Islamabad. We were able to pass on welfare support to our brethren and also of course to Br K. Everyone is truly thankful to you all.

The dangers of working in Afghanistan are considerable. We simply ask for your prayers of thanks for so many deliverances, many of which are not told in this report, and for your prayerful support in the future. There are now others interested in the truth, against all odds, and we prayerfully remember both them and our existing brethren. Taleban and other Moslem extremist graffiti is everywhere in evidence. Here are two examples which gave us some measure of both warning and encouragement as we walked the streets in search of God's true people:

“A curse on those who are not obedient to the book [Koran]!”



“Truth and error will always fight, and the truth of the book will win in the end”



1-M said :

“when brother S and W [already baptized in Afghanistan] returned from Pakistan [the February Bible School], I noticed their excitement and unity. One morning I found a book beneath the pillow, picked that up to read but brother S did not allow me to get it. I become suspicious about the book and thought that might be porno book .so I make plan to steal it, see it and place it secretly. After few days I got an opportunity to pick it.

I went to privacy to check the book. It was a dari/farsi Bible Basic. I found nothing there what I was expecting. So I thought may be I picked a wrong book. So at that evening I come back to Brother S holding the book in my hand. He jumped to snatch it and started requesting that I should not tell any body about him and this book. I was amazing that what is wrong with this book. I left him that day. After few days I asked him about the REAL BOOK and I also assured him that I never tell anybody if he show me the REAL PORNO BOOK. Than he started sharing why he has hidden that book, that it was not porno, it was hidden because it is of Christianity, and what is its real message. As I had not been a practicing Muslim and being sick of Taleban and I hated them but still I disliked Christianity. When I found brother S alone I started teasing him by asking him about that porno book. He starts explaining Bible Basic. I never paid attention what he explained about Jesus love's and message of the WORD. But the tolerance of brother S and his care and helping me made me to think that some thing really GOOD happened to him. I was lucky to borrow his book for study. He never believed me when I responded that I like this religion. It carries the real gospel as it says that God is one and do not complicate it to understand HIM and denied superficial powers . It has scientific teachings and views. Gradually we become free and frank. . Then I received more teaching, to study, watch the brothers praying and breaking bread. I have now accepted Jesus Christ as my savior. I am feeling wonderful after baptism. I am excited to know that I am member of God's family and I have thousands of

brothers and sisters around the globe. Now and onward I never feel alone in Afghanistan. I pray that may heavenly Father use me to serve Him here.”

2-A runs a small business of items that he buys from Pakistan and sells in different parts of Afghanistan. He said

“Long time ago a western Couple gave me an audiotape about Jesus Christ in Farsi. I don’t know anything more about them. I heard several stories of Healings that Jesus performed that no other prophet done like HIM. So I was really touched wanted to know more but I never met with those or other western missionary. I thought that I could only learn and hear from western people about Jesus Christ. I know brother W from a very long time. He always talked about the miseries of our people. Like other Afghani educated people he has been against extremist and Islamic fundamentalist. During the Taliban, I have been making business trip to Peshawar Pakistan. Many times Brother W has asked me to bring newspaper or magazines for him. So I used to bring newspapers and magazines secretly. after the fall of Taliban we started taking breath in fresh air. I developed a profitable business by bring Pakistani and Indian movies and selling them as people has craze to satisfy their hunger of many years of being unable to watch movies. Once Brother W asked and given me a phone number to call and ask whether THE MOVIE is available that I could pick and bring that to brother Wadood. I called and was told that I can collect the movie from medical store of one friend. So I collect the movies from that shop and tear the enveloped that one should not notice that this is special videotape, which has wrapped or sealed. As I tore the wrapped paper I found the film ISSA [Jesus]. I became impatient to watch it.

When I brought that to Brother W, he seem hesitated that I should have not unwrapped it and he refused to watch me this movie but I resistant and insist that if he minds to watch it with him or with his friends than I ll watch it alone in my place. He agreed. After four days he gave me ISSA [Jesus] movie, I rushed to my place and impatiently started watching it alone. I laughed with rejoice and I was excited to see ISSA talking Dari. I watched Him healing the people, talking about God and giving His message. I watched that Movie 3 times in five days. Than I gave back it to Brother W. I told him that I like this movie and ISSA very much. he asked me whether I like read about HIM a book. I said yes, after few days He given me Bible Basic and time to time he met me alone and encourage me. Once he believed that I am serious to learn more about ISSA than he led me to group study. When I saw the two other Afghanis studying, sharing testimonies and praying for one another my heart change to accept HIM my savior. I put my faith on Jesus Christ and very happy that I am baptized by senior friends and to know that I am part of a great ecclesia and loving people”.