

April 2023 Iran, Russia, Turkey Appeal

IRAN

About a year ago, an app user called GENGHIS corresponded to us, but wanting more time to study the Bible. Now a year later he feels he has grasped all the doctrines from the *Bible Companion* app and it was a pleasure to baptize him online, using VPN to avoid the blocks on us by the regime there. As ever, appreciative of brother Arash [in Birmingham UK] for translating. Truly the seed does grow over time. To His glory.



RUSSIA

Happy to report the self baptism of IVAN. The economic and social situation is very difficult for our dear ones in Russia, what with the war, sanctions, so many now reporting others to the Police for unpatriotic behaviour, worse even than in the Communist years.

TURKEY

We have mentioned previously that over 25 years ago, we baptized brother Mehmet and his wife sister Necva, in Antakya, Turkey. They have remained faithful to the Lord all down those years. Here's an old photo at their baptism:



The recent earthquake has flattened much of Antakya and their apartment is ruined beyond repair- the whole block will either fall over, as many blocks are doing, or will eventually be demolished. We have sent significant funds to our brother and sister who were living in a camp a long way from Antakya. Their plan is that Necva lives with their daughter and Mehmet returns to Antakya to establish a tent near their apartment. In line with current Government policy, those who remain living in the immediate area will be eventually compensated- but if they move away, they won't be. So Mehmet has moved his few belongings from the camp where they were [we paid for a small pick-up truck to bring them] and is now sleeping in the Neighbour's tent whilst he tries to get his own [insulated] tent. As this is all going to cost significant funds, we didn't want to appeal to you without first checking it all out. We extensively videoed the scenes and also Mehmet's apartment block and his own statements, all of which were obviously credible.

The video is at <https://youtu.be/MpptSAR0oHU>

Indeed the destruction is incredible. One has to see it to grasp the scale of it- a large city largely flattened or uninhabitable, with those remaining living in containers or tents and surviving from soup kitchens.

The economy is wrecked- there are very few shops operating, food is bought from peddlers.

Here's the remains of what was once the Mercedes dealership in Antakya:



Wrecked cars are everywhere, and a car graveyard has sprung up on the edge of the city:



Whole areas of rubble mark where estates of apartment blocks once stood, and most of those still standing are awaiting demolition. Many are in an unstable state. It's common to see parts of buildings collapsing- sometimes the dust is just unbearable:



There are stray cats and dogs everywhere. Really sad. Many with name tags around their necks from happier days as domestic pets. Driving around is hazardous- falling masonry calls for abrupt 3-point turns, and there are power lines down, some of them live just lying in the streets:



Brother Mehmet has limited English but thanks to Google Translate we managed fine. Here's the rubble from the block where his 78-year-old mother lived. She escaped with her life and "just" broken ribs:



Our brother was very emotional in showing their apartment block. Although he shows a commendable "cup half full" attitude, grateful for life, for having survived, seeing God's hand in it despite "the loss of all things". He explained how when the earthquake happened, they saw huge gaps appearing in their walls, they dashed out of the flat to the stairwell, but it was blocked with fallen masonry, so they escaped by clinging on to their curtain. They have left that curtain in the window in the spirit of Rahab leaving her cord in the window, as a sign of hope, of God's grace. It was the first thing our brother pointed out as we approached the apartment block- it's a hugely significant photo. You can see how the actual carcass / load bearing structure of the block is cracked- the whole block can fall over at any time:



We paid for a pick-up truck to bring his few belongings to Antakya and he will now sleep with a Neighbour who has set up a tent, until he can set up his own tent:



Tents need to be well insulated, so they don't become unbearably hot in Summer and cold in Winter- there's a wide temperature range in Antakya. In one of these tents you can see the metal foil insulation. It's a big come down for a man when your highest hope is to get a half decent tent to live in. He explains in the video that the Government aren't providing tents. But some political parties are providing tents for their voters. He also explained that he could get permission to set up a tent on the grass of the playground opposite his block, and there is some water connection there. There's also a toilet and shower unit in a neighbouring tent city. He feels this will best

enable him to keep in line with the Government's promise to provide compensation for those who lost their homes but have remained living locally. Only downside is that he would not be able to put a container on that land, but an insulated tent would be allowable:



We went to the open-air soup kitchen where he will have to go to get food. A big come down for a man who raised his two children, got them through university, owned his apartment and was moving towards retirement. This soup kitchen feeds 10,000 people 3 x / day- note the collapsed building behind it:



The bottom line is that we are seeking to raise 2000 GB £ to send to our brother in order to provide the insulated tent [like a yurt really] and other help. Please do respond, this is a real need, and our brother has been known to us 25 years. And you can see from the video that the need indeed is real and urgent.

Whilst in Turkey it was a joy to meet with EMILY and her sister in Istanbul, and to baptize her into the Lord Jesus. Emily had started looking for God and His Son in earnest once moving to Turkey as a student, downloaded the Bible Companion app, applied for a hard copy NEV Bible, used it regularly and learnt the truths of the Gospel. She then started attending our Zoom breaking of bread meeting on Saturdays and is now a baptized sister in the Lord Jesus. Such a lovely person do pray for her as life isn't easy as a foreigner in Turkey. Come to our Saturday meetings and you'll probably meet her live online.

Video of the baptism at <https://youtu.be/lavOZlliusc>



PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For brother Mehmet as he seeks to get an insulated tent and live in it for the medium term
- For his and his wife's psycho health as they pass through "the loss of all things"
- For wisdom as to how to help further in Antakya Turkey
- For our brethren in Russia having to live with Neighbours and colleagues who may report them for unpatriotic behaviour

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks