

August 2011 China, MP3s, Various Updates

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Mark 9 and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mk9.mp3>

VARIOUS UPDATES

Readers are welcome to contact us directly if they'd like updates on any of the brothers or sisters or initiatives we report on; we can't give weekly updates on everyone. But we thought we'd let you know about a few: Sister J is now in a Government shelter although her baby will likely be taken away from her on birth- a situation far better than could have been but still very sad; brother Viktor continues to make very slow progress from his stroke but is able to read the Bible now and communicate, which he says are "the main things"; others are beginning battles with cancer, often with no money to buy the prescribed medicines or pay to see specialists; and from Kyrgyzstan we have heard from our dear families there with the news that they have got the property in basic order and are looking forward to being able to live there together once the school year starts in September, Lord willing. In all these things we are thankful for your prayers and continued support.

Every path to God is different, but last week we baptized Viktor in the sea near Riga, and he's now provided his personal testimony which in some ways is typical of so many in the former USSR:

"I was born into an atheist home, my parents were factory workers and I grew up a keen member of the Komsomol (Communist Youth League). I suppose like all young people I was attracted to the forbidden, and I perceived very clearly that the whole issue of "God" wasn't seriously engaged with, we were taught not to ask questions about it, to leave it well alone, to focus upon science and the philosophy of labour. I remember wondering why my mother had to go back to work so soon after she gave birth to my younger sister, it seemed almost immediately, and the answer was that the state would raise the child, my sister would be looked after in kindergarten, but, my mum had to be at work. I had my questions, such as, there was indeed full employment but people did such pointless things, we worked in a slow and lazy way because each job had so many workers, at one point my mum was employed to be the one who watered flowers on the window sills of the factory, and she had to work night shift doing it, there were three women full time employed to do this; but she couldn't stay at home with my newborn sister, she had to be at work, to build the USSR by labour. Well I concluded that what was wrong with the USSR must be connected to the problem we had with this "God" question.

I had so many questions, but nowhere to go for answers. And I was scared to ask about it or talk with others about it. There was a great interest amongst Soviet people in music from the West, we would swap and trade recordings of the Beatles, anything Western we thought was good because it was forbidden. One day I traded some Beatles recordings for Jesus Christ Superstar. I thought it would help me know something about Jesus Christ. You may laugh, I laugh at myself now, but this was how little I knew. I tried to transcribe every word and then translate it into Russian. I didn't learn much about Jesus Christ from it, but I was encouraged to learn more about Him, simply because those songs didn't tell me anything about Him as I wanted to know. So I found a New Testament. I read but I didn't understand. I so wanted someone to guide me. As life went on I was busy, with my work, with family, my youthful rebel instinct faded. But when glasnost came with Gorbachev and we could more freely enquire about religion, and then in the 1990s churches started opening, I attended.

But I was like the Ethiopian man in the chariot wanting to have the Bible explained. I didn't find that. The Orthodox chanted and did rituals, the Pentecostals wanted me to tithe to them, they

told me I must speak in tongues or else I wasn't saved, another church told me I must believe in trinity, when I said I'd read the New Testament many times and not found the word there, they asked me to leave, but they didn't explain anything to me. I went here and there and became disillusioned. All I wanted was simple Bible explanation. With all the economic changes, life became hard for my wife and I. Our pensions are very small and despite working all our lives we hardly have money to buy food. We manage to keep out of living in the night shelters, we have our own room, but it's all we can do to pay the heating in Winter, we have no land to farm and it's hard to have money to buy food. An old friend in the same situation told me of a place where the Bible is explained, and a meal provided.

These were the two things I wanted so badly that day he told me. From the moment I attended the Riga Bible Center, I knew this was for me. I was given a copy of the Bible Companion and I saw the sense of it. The readings were a bit difficult for me the first time, from the prophets and the history books, and from Revelation. But it all made sense going through the chapter and having it explained. I read the chapters at home too, and took home with me the books on display. I read them several times. I was so pleased my wife also read them. And so we came to the most significant day of our lives, being baptized. Thank you God, thank you Jesus, and thank you all involved in providing such teaching and the true way to the Kingdom of God on earth".

CHINA

It's great to see our Chinese brethren preaching on their own initiative. Brother Donald has set up a Chinese language "Bible Basics reading group" whereby people read a section and then meet online to discuss it. As you can see from the below, some have stuck the course to the end and want baptism, others want more literature in hard copy. That's amazing. The true Gospel is truly spreading all over the world. May the end soon come! Our brother writes: "We read the *Bible Basics* together from the beginning to the end on our group. XYao and LYang wish to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Chen Gang an old man, often participated every Sunday, he is hoping to meet us and be connected. Could you please send them New Testament with commentary? God bless"

We hope to report soon of baptisms from this work. Anyone wanting copies of Bible Basics in Chinese or any language are welcome to contact us.

MP3s

Carelinks encourage the daily reading of the Bible according to the *Bible Companion*, a copy of which is available at <http://carelinks.net/doc/bc> and we also have hard copies we can send to anyone. Each week we provide an MP3 of a Bible talk on the New Testament portion of the *Bible Companion* readings, designed to lead our thoughts towards the breaking of bread. According to our stats, sometimes up to 100 people listen to these recordings, so you will be in fellowship with brothers and sisters worldwide reading the same chapters and hearing the same MP3. Those of you who do listen regularly might be interested in having a discussion forum to discuss that week's talk; if so, email us and in due course we'll try to set something up. The MP3s are mentioned in the Carelink messages each week, but ahead of time, here's the program for the next 3 months:

August 21 <http://aletheiacollege.net/audio/risen.mp3>

August 28 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/1cor10.mp3>

September 4 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/2cor34.mp3>

September 11 <http://carelinks.net/audio/talks/HeasterJohnBaptist.mp3>

September 18 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk10.mp3>

September 25 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk18.mp3>

October 2 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/gal12.mp3>
October 9 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/phil34.mp3>
October 16 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/jn8.mp3>
October 23 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/jn19.mp3>
October 30 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/acts8.mp3>
November 6 <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/acts1819.mp3>

POWERPOINT

Br Steve Gretton made a presentation about Carelinks work at the recent Christadelphian Summer Bible School in Birmingham UK, he presented from a powerpoint which is now online at <http://www.carelinks.net/files/Carelinksppt.pptx> . It will take a while to download- 65 MB- but it's a resource for anyone wanting to make such a presentation to groups. Steve's notes are contained within the presentation.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks