

## Azerbaijan News August 2004

Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who so kindly contributed to making up the funds stolen from Liz whilst en route to the Iranian brethren in Azerbaijan. She's now safely back in the UK.

A trip still needed to be made to the brethren there, and this has just taken place. We found them all in good shape but still with so many nerve wracking uncertainties. Three of them are due to leave for Canada within the next few months, God willing- indeed, they could leave any time now. In the meantime, they have to live on. The nervous stress of waiting takes a big toll. Here's part of a mail recently received after leaving them:

my brother

i felt so sorry for myself tonight, but more than myself i felt sorru for those people... i wish if i could crying for a day or a week! but i can't cry i don't know why ? but i can't cry! my heart is broken and my proud too, how i could be possitive when i can't see any thing positive ?????! I wish if i have you for long time here but i realize that you have your own life too!

lots of love and regard

God bless

One brother was living in an apartment in a very poor area. We stayed a night with him, and that was bad enough. Young men knocking on the door at 02:00 a.m. offering syringes of heroin for sale, or to sleep with a drug addicted girl for \$5. The local Azeris don't like Iranians, and it was really necessary to move our brother out to a safer apartment. Moving his belongings was a really sad affair- we got a taxi, but it boiled down to just a few plastic bags. And the tragedy is, this brother once had a good job and enjoyed a good lifestyle in an Iranian city. We're all strangers and pilgrims on this earth, but seeing a once prosperous man now reduced to a few bags of possessions, his Bible and a few treasured photos of home and our earlier visits really brings it home. And all this, for the sake of his conversion to and preaching of the same Lord Jesus whom we all believe in, the radical consequences of whom we also have signed up to. We're pleased to say that we moved him in to a flat in a far safer neighbourhood. It was a gripping experience to stay up late one night, hearing our brother explain how about 2 months after his baptism, he felt a real confrontation with the Lord Jesus, and felt impelled to witness to Him despite the danger. After converting 5 people, he fled to Azerbaijan for his life.

Photos: Moving our brother's few possessions from one apartment to another





We held a moving breaking of bread together.

The sisters are trying to keep busy making a tapestry and other things, which we can offer for sale in order to raise funds for the work of supporting so many in these situations.

Photo: Sisters with their tapestry



Our young br B & Sis M are in a bad situation again. This is the couple who were imprisoned, tortured, handed the death sentence, and then were bribed out to relative safety in Azerbaijan [to cut a very long story short]. The change of Azerbaijan law means that they have had to apply for citizenship of Azerbaijan first, and if refused, then UNHCR would take their case. They made the application, and were refused- but now are told that before UNHCR can consider their case, they must appeal. Meanwhile the Azeri law states they must leave the country, and they have nowhere to go apart from back to their death sentence in Iran. We are in touch with lawyers and the UNHCR to try to get this situation changed, but one thing we have learnt is that it is PRAYER that changes things, and we do ask for your prayers for them. They are all so truly grateful for the time and financial support being put into trying to rescue them, and also for the visits of Cindy and Liz.

Here's a photo of them, with a present of goodies kindly sent over by a sister from Australia which we were happy to deliver:



We were able to make contact with a number of local contacts, and we're very happy to announce the baptism of PIOTR and SVETLANA, two Russian internet contacts who have been searching for Bible truth for a very long time. They were baptized in the dirty waters of the Caspian Sea, the world's most polluted sea [the only sea that is naturally polluted- the oil seams come out naturally into the water]. You can see the oil rig in the background.



However, we also met with another contact from Iran, who wasn't yet ready for baptism. This was very disappointing, but hopefully she will meet up with Liz on her next visit. Our Iranian brothers and sisters are actively spreading the Truth by every means they can.

So, please do continue your prayers and care for these very dear brothers and sisters and contacts, that they may keep strong spiritually, nervously and physically, and soon be able to rebuild their broken lives in a safer country.