

December 2022 Afghanistan, Germany, India, North America, Ukraine, UK

AFGHANISTAN

We spend a fair time each week holding online meetings with contacts and baptized brethren in Iran and Afghanistan. Their situation continues difficult with repressive fundamentalist regimes, family betrayal etc. And the Winter in Afghanistan is already very hard, with the country bankrupt and reports of people selling their children for food. And it's so hard to send aid to them there. And on top of all these things, the problem of stooge contacts, people pretending interest in the Gospel when clearly their intention is to find contact details of Christian people whom they can then persecute. So we do appreciate your prayers for our wisdom and the ongoing work and triumph of the Gospel despite all this difficult background noise.

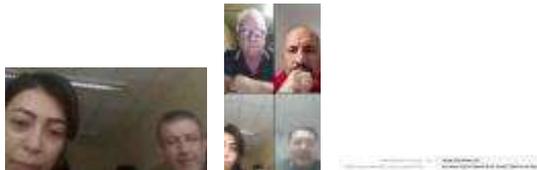
This week we are pleased to report the baptism of AHMED, baptized by one of our already baptized brothers, although he has subsequently suffered a lot for it and is currently living in a guest house in another city in fear from his own relatives. Do pray for the situation.

And then in other meetings online [we've held them every day this week] we were able to baptize sister SHAMSIA, with some from the *Croydon Pub Church* attending and contributing online as she speaks English, then another married couple AMINULLAH and NARGIS; later ABDUL, and again later MIRWAIS.

We're so grateful for brother Reza in **Canada** and brother Arash in the UK who are such a gift to this work, always available and ready to translate at a moment's notice. Please also pray for those who are counting the possible cost of their conversion, and who fear they can't trust anyone enough to be baptized by us even online:

GERMANY

After lots of correspondence and chats and explanations, not to mention extensive usage of the *Bible Companion* app, we were able to baptize a husband and wife ZAHRA and SHAHRAM. So very sincere, and they have messaged every day since to express their gratitude and continued devotion to the Lord Jesus despite very difficult circumstances:



INDIA

Last week we reported the baptism of a medical doctor in Calcutta, Tapas. This week it was our joy to assist our brother online to baptize his charming wife PRYEKA. Again we marvel at the global spread of the true Gospel to independent minded, thoughtful people worldwide.



NORTH AMERICA

Not everyone wants to get into their bath tub and do a baptism service in view of relative strangers online, and that's fair enough. So after much correspondence, ASHLEY baptized herself in her bath tub. We've put our new sister in touch with brother Jim Barton for his online

meetings. She wrote afterwards:

"I have finished, and I would like to share my experience with you, as I sought out spiritual guidance and stumbled upon you and if it wasn't for your guidance and encouragement today probably would not have happened and I thank you for that. It's been on my heart this week to do this, but I wasn't sure what exactly it would look like and have been praying and trying to wait on God's direction. I knew I wanted something more personal and meaningful, so thank you. I read Romans 6 this morning, and then again in the tub before I started. I had written out the prayers attached in the document after reading Romans 6 the first time before beginning the baptism, and I printed them and with them and my bible went in the tub. I went through it, read the bible, prayed, went in the water, and then prayed afterwards. I sat in the bathtub as I let the water drain, eyes closed, praying some of the time and then trying to be still and silent just listening to the water drain down the rest of the time. My body felt heavy, knees hurt. Once the water drained, I got up and went to get my towel, and noticed that my body was almost completely dry (hair was wet), before even using my towel. I felt less heavy after, less rushed, more at peace. I suffer from anxiety and although I was somewhat nervous in doing this, I did not feel anxious.

I attached the prayers; in case anyone ever comes to you with a relatable situation, in need of truly letting go and trusting. I've worked in mental health and recovery for years and in AA there is a "cliche saying" that people I have worked with always recite as a way to remind themselves what they must do to stay sober, "Faith without works is dead." And once I said to someone "you know that saying you always say to me, 'faith without works is dead.' Well, the opposite is true too, works without faith is dead." I thought I was talking to him, but it turns out God was trying to tell me something. I have been "doing the works" for many years, but somewhere along the way I lost the faith needed to achieve or live out God's will. I keep relying on my own will, ability, and need to control everything, thinking "I can save or fix" and the truth is, I can't do anything on my own, never could and never will. I know that deep down, and although my intentions were in the right place the whole time, my heart was in the right place, I lost the faith needed to carry anything out. Thank you again for everything, continue doing God's work.

Always,

Ashley "

Let's all keep praying every day for meetings with people like this whom we can assist towards God's Kingdom and His dear Son.

UKRAINE

The damage to Ukraine's power grid means that many are without energy especially in rural areas. There's been huge demand for firewood because of this, but due to the war situation, firewood is expensive and at a premium. So we're trying to provide as we can. But it's so hard... the best one can do is try to buy from private shall we say "operators" who are just cutting down random trees here and there. We've spent a long time consulting about wind turbines and solar panels. The simple fact is, that to raise the temperature from -20 to room temperature of +15, you need a lot of energy. And solar and wind don't produce much unless you install on a very large scale. Peak need is at night, when temperatures are lowest. But whatever energy created by solar or wind must be stored... lots of major batteries. And snow needs to be cleared off solar panels and the daylight hours are short in Winter... it's so hard to find energy sources when the existing ones have been knocked out. We have sent significant funds to various ones throughout Ukraine, especially those in rural areas. We especially think of sister Nana and brother Alexei, who fled their home in an occupied area and are now living in a remote wooden house previously derelict, in the middle of nowhere. They are in their 70s and with usual health issues-

and they're cold. So let's pray we can get firewood delivered to them. You may have seen pictures like this on the media, but the reality in rural areas is even harsher:



We plan further trips to Ukraine and are open to your donations for Winter welfare there which is looking to be very significant this Winter. Serious Winter has come early- sister Nana sent us photos of apples still on the trees, now covered in snow:



Here are some of the messages we're receiving, expressing needs and also gratitude:



UK

Our brothers and sisters from Croydon Church in a Pub have been coming out with us this week street preaching near The Venue in central Croydon, where God willing we plan to start "Lunchtime church" in the new year.

Corinne and others turned out really great at street preaching. You can see her in action in the video at

<https://youtu.be/YCqZvSBtjTQ>



And then we baptized GAD, an app user for 2 years, having first downloaded the Bible Companion app in Nigeria and still using it now he's a university student in the UK. Always great to see an intelligent, smart young person grasping the Truth, and yet having the humility to obey the call.

Video at <https://youtu.be/wApKLDRMne8>



And what a day we had this Sunday at Croydon Church in a Pub. Brother Spiro, who rebaptized himself into the Lord Jesus after rejecting Trinitarian baptism and got thrown out of his church because of it, was so happy to witness the baptism of his nephew LEE. We had many from the pub church come back to Duncan & Cindy's place to witness Lee's baptism in the bath tub.

What was so wonderful too was the mature comments, prayers and words of encouragement from those present. It's just amazing that in just over 6 months, this church has so come together and there's so much maturity and enthusiasm already. You can see the video at <https://youtu.be/hRog6diqzP0>

Do listen especially to the prayers, the discussions... this is real spiritual growth, in response to God's movement through His word and His Spirit in the lives of ordinary south Londoners who it seems were just waiting for this to happen.

In the photos you can see Lee eating at the bar after church in a pub, our Italian sister Silvana speaking so maturely to Lee, his uncle brother Spiro exhorting him, and the joyful baptism service and chats over coffee around the kitchen table:



And although Lee is a solid South London bloke from Mitcham... looking around the table, we had to marvel at the birthplaces of us all, typical of the multicultural scene in London: Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Surinam. All brought together in this unusual church the Lord has established so deeply but so quickly.

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- That we can get firewood and energy to those in need in Ukraine
- Thanksgiving for the great growth spiritually amongst so many in South London
- For those counting the cost of conversion in Afghanistan

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks