

February 2017 UK, Germany, Japan, Australia, Latvia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Mark 15 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/mk15.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the NEV Bible with commentary and Bible Companion bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

GERMANY

We mentioned last week the trip made to Belgium and Germany; brother Steve writes up his part as follows:

"Please do not take our photo."

This Iranian couple are now living in Belgium in a quiet safe town, well away from the troubled centres of unrest in Brussels, yet they have a realistic fear that if news of their conversion to Christ were to leak out, then they are in real danger of death or injury. SHAPOUR and his wife AZAM are grandparents who have left Iran about 12 months ago to help their son look after their young grand-daughter.

Their son's friend Farsio was baptised with his wife when Duncan and Steve went there 4 years ago and it was Farsio and his wife Raheleh who provided beds and excellent Iranian food for us. Shapour and Azam had grasped the opportunity to obtain Bibles and started a thorough study of the Bible and worked through *Bible Basics*. They have spent hours every day since then reading and studying and their many thick note books are filled with their thoughts and discoveries. Rarely do you meet such dedicated students of the Word.

Andy Taylor and Steve Gretton visited them after they requested baptism, but rather than seeing if they understood the truth, we were confronted with many questions! Whenever we brought up any subject, they knew the answers and could quote stories from the Bible in great detail. Nothing took them by surprise. Farsio emphasised the thought that they were all unfamiliar with the idea of religion not being used to enhance one's economic welfare or power. They had been listening to the recorded material on the Carelinks site in Farsi language.

And so with delight they were baptised into Christ in their son's house, a fun-loving man who became increasingly more serious and engaged in the conversations that were flowing around him. And it was he who prepared the bread and the wine for our celebration at the Lord's table. There is no doubt that the Lord reaches out to affect those who are giving their lives to him. Such people regularly speak of a great sense of calm and happiness filling them at the time of their baptism and we have often seen that the Lord is very active in their lives after baptism in ways which they themselves admit takes them by surprise.

Within their political system in Iran, the phrase "*giving your life to the Lord*" has a much more literal significance, but so also the promise of our Lord Jesus, "*I will come to you.*" But the day before the baptisms, we met another son and his wife on the last day of their holiday from Iran. The wife was distant and cool towards us. She wore a typical Moslem head covering and would not shake our hands. We assumed she was a quiet submissive wife. But at one point she suddenly asked in excellent English what exactly Christianity was. I introduced her to Jesus, describing his life, his actions, his words, his attitudes, his death and the evidence for his resurrection, and why I concluded that he was truly God's son. It was as if a light had come on in her mind! She was deeply attentive and became increasingly animated. The conversation of the whole group gradually centred on our discussion.

As she left I offered her a Bible. Not surprisingly she declined - but not because she was Muslim - which might have been expected - but simply because it was too dangerous to have one in Iran, which is understandable. But I felt able to say to her that if when she came to Belgium next time she wished to be baptised then we would make the arrangements. She smiled but said she had her own beliefs. After she had left the group were very excited and explained that far from appearances she was a highly qualified senior lecturer in Philosophy at one of the top Tehran universities. She was totally committed to her Islamic beliefs and had studied world religions in connection with her doctorate. They said they could not have imagined she would take such an interest. The next day after she had gone, her parents in law said that on returning back with them to their house she had talked at length about the conversation and described the encounter as one of the greatest experiences in her life! Surely the Lord is at work and it must be that she saw him and heard what he wanted to say. It was not me. Please pray for her and for husband and his brother, that the Lord's efforts to reach out to this unlikely contact will bear fruit to our Father's glory.

UK

We held house church at Bexleyheath this week and were pleased to baptize MOHSEN, a young man smuggled out of the infamous Calais jungle, after a nightmare journey there across Europe, in a refrigerated truck full of oranges. The moisture in that situation apparently keeps sniffer dogs off the scent. In all these lives we see the Lord's hand at work, so earnestly seeking to save. You can see our young brother giving a good confession before his baptism and explaining his unusual journey to this moment:



We've had hundreds of replies to last Saturday's "Get a free Bible" advert in the *Daily Mail* newspaper, proving once again that white working class Anglo Saxons [a group we might assume have little interest] are starting to lift their eyes to their maker. Do come along to Croydon this Saturday [God willing] to our Carelinks conference and help write to all these people personally. See <http://carelinks.net/doc/events> for details.

This year there have been a lot more requests from prison, in previous years the advert brought in literally one or two from prisons, now there are quite a lot. *Daily Mail* is obviously put in UK prisons, and the prison regime is in crisis in the UK. We had the following very nice letter... from a not so nice guy in the past, you can read his crime at <http://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/other/shameless-thief-who-stole-two-poppy-appeal-boxes-is-to-spend-christmas-behind-bars/ar-BBxoa8l>

This is what drug addiction leads to. But thank God he has turned to the Lord. Let us know if you'd like his mailing address.



JAPAN

Sister Helen Pyper shares with us some amazing news from the strict regime prison in Japan where sister Danielle is incarcerated; Helen received a letter from Danielle as follows:

"One miracle that I have to share with you is that I just saw in the prison library here a copy of "Bible Basics" ! Isn't that amazing. It is the work of God because NO book no matter who its from, donated or anything is ever allowed to be accepted/put in the library etc. It is so strict. Only what the government provides. When I saw the book on the shelf, I nearly fell to my knees on the spot! What a miracle! I am praying that it gets used. Unfortunately the staff have labelled it under a 'normal book', and given it a yellow sticker (which restricts it. We only get ` 1 stickered book at a time - instead of classifying it as a religious book. We can only get out 3 normal books, 2 study and 2 religious books, and I know if it was under 'religious books' it would be taken out all of the time (as there's only a few Bibles and a few Jesus/Christian type books in this category to chose from). And since we can only get 3 normal books to last 2 weeks and most girls tend to go for novels and stuff. I am praying and hoping that the spirit moves in them all to get it out though. It helped and changed my life in so many wonderful ways, and brought me into God's family, which I want for everyone!

Again it's thanks to your donations that we can print books like *Bible Basics* and get them out into libraries worldwide.

AUSTRALIA

We mentioned earlier how we were asked to donate *NEV Bibles* to residents of a care home in Sydney, and this led to the CEO asking us to provide Bibles in other care homes he runs; this was done, and the Bibles have a statement of our beliefs in the back. We agreed on the basis that brother John Thatcher would give Bible talks at one of the care homes, and he reports:

"Did the first Bible talk at aged care yesterday. Had about 13 residents, + 1 nurse + daughter of resident, + CEO of the joint. Went well. Some seemed to be comatose, but lots of questions + discussion from others. So we'll keep it up - see how we go"

LATVIA

The feeding scheme continues here; it's been blessed with the baptism of NIKITA this week, but the whole project is really costing a lot of money all round, including supporting brother Maxim. Please do donate as you can. And huge thanks to all those who have supported, and those who have been over helping with the cooking this week- here you can see April, Tom, Sarah and Mel from the UK along with our brother Nikita; and Tom and Andy baptizing Nikita:



PRAYER POINTS

- For sister Danielle and others in prison, and our outreach to them
- For all the outreach going on to secular folks in the UK and Australia
- For the continued blessing and guidance upon the work in Latvia
- For those recently baptized

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks