

January 2021 Iran, Latvia, French

We strongly recommend you download the "*Bible Companion*" app, from where you can access *Carelinks* messages, daily Bible readings, *Bible Basics*, commentary on every verse of the Bible and audio exhortations on every chapter of the Bible.

For Android / Google Play at

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.carelinks.bc>

and on the App Store for Apple / iOS at

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/bible-companion/id1475914490>

You can break bread live online as follows:

Sunday mornings GMT on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/69292278377>

Sundays at 3:00 PM New Zealand time. That's 1 PM in Sydney Australia; 10 PM in New York, USA on Saturday evening [run by Br John Aldersley in New Zealand]

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81842718993?pwd=YWY1K0dDOW8yVCs2MDh4Mm80YWdoZz09>

Sundays at 10am North American Eastern Time [3 PM UK GMT time, 11 PM Sydney Australia time]. Run by Br Jim Barton in Canada.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9123758179>

Meeting ID: 912 375 8179

FRENCH

There are nearly 100,000 active users of the French app and a steady stream of baptisms and interested contacts, including from people who have come to agree with our positions from the app, but feel their earlier non-trinitarian baptisms were valid. Craig and Miriam are running a WhatsApp group in French for teaching, fellowship and breaking bread, let us know if you want to join it or know people who would.

LATVIA

With Covid raging, morgues and hospitals full and the health service effectively suspended, let alone the collapsed economy and Arctic temperatures at the moment, things are very difficult and depressive here. The curfew is strictly enforced now by the army as well as the Police, with troop carriers and soldiers out well before curfew starts to remind everyone to get indoors and stay there. Not complaining, just saying. For sure, desperate measures are needed. All shops apart from food shops are closed. We rely upon the second hand clothes stores to buy various items for our folks and contacts but that's not possible now, and as the hall is closed, locals no longer drop off their spare clothes for us to use as they used to. So we have been appealing on social media for local Latvians to donate any spare clothes and blankets and there has been good response, although we have to go around gathering the donations.



Brother Robert continues a huge help in the work. Many of those baptized and others we know from the soup kitchen are not able to stay in the night shelters and are squatting where they can in derelict buildings and sheds near the TV tower by the river. These are often inhabited by drug addicts and alcoholics, with whom they have no option but to live, and we naturally share the food we bring with them too. And spread Bibles and teach the good news of the Kingdom as we can.

There are a few videos of Robert chatting in English as he goes around doing this work. There are

some shots of taking food to some men sitting in a shed literally shivering, dressed up well but just sitting there shivering in the extreme cold. We typically give them the food and blankets or clothes and firewood, talk about the Gospel, and then pray. You can see below one suffering man making the effort to stand up as we prayed, holding his 'new' blanket around his legs.

The videos are at

<https://youtu.be/MUJZdu1QBX8> and <https://youtu.be/o3KXEc1L9-Q>



We also take food packages out to those who are sitting on the streets, especially the invalids who can't stay in the "night shelters" in the day time and have to sit on the street all day- rather difficult as they are on crutches and the streets are so icy and slippery.



The work we do always supports our continual witness to the things of the Lord Jesus and God's Kingdom. One man Vladimir is terminally ill and very weak, although able to spend the nights in a night shelter. We arranged his baptism, went to collect him in the morning- to be told he was struggling to breathe because of Covid and had been totally isolated. So we are praying he will make it through and be able to be baptized, although his situation is pretty dire humanly speaking.

You can see a video about this as it happened at

<https://youtu.be/q0xR0M3X6N8>

Please do view it and pray for him.

We manage to get food and other items out to folks most days, please pray for us as we obviously face a lot of obstacles at this time.

IRAN

This has been a very busy week. In addition to the constant issues in *Riga*, the *Farsi Bible Companion app* and associated online work is all resulting in the development of a real underground church in Iran and Afghanistan.

We have had baptisms in Iran for 5 days running this week. Thanks to *WhatsApp* and other encrypted platforms, we can hold regular teaching and fellowship sessions as well as do the baptisms with some sense of community. There are other brethren from throughout Europe and North America also able to be present. We have more and more Iranians getting seriously interested, i.e. Iranians within Iran. This phenomenon is widely testified- that Iranians are turning to Christianity despite the repressive Islamic regime.

Our offer of an online Bible app in Farsi is just what so many of them are looking for, as these folks want to become Christian but lack any church to attend or any other specific teaching from anyone about what the Bible actually says.

Firstly at the start of the week there was RAHA , who is a doctor, dealing with lots of Covid cases, and has made a very deep and serious commitment to the Lord Jesus in difficult circumstances. Then there was ALLI, a farm hand who knows some English and simply loves the Lord Jesus and the Bible. He would call to discuss his questions whilst at work in the fields; in those fields he

listens to the audio on the app.

Our brother decided to become Christian about a year ago, although he lacked the Bible knowledge he now has. But in that time, he was beaten by those with whom he shared his conversion, and still lives in fear. Do pray for him:

Next day, KOUROSH was baptized, with eight of us witnessing:

This was followed by SAFOURA, an intense young woman speaking excellent English who has totally devoted herself to the Lord Jesus as her Saviour, with His Kingdom as her passionate hope. She's bottom left in the photo. There's such a range of fish picked up by the gospel net. As her English is good she'll be able to join the weekly breaking of bread on WhatsApp run for the Farsi speakers in Iran and Afghanistan who know English. It's run by Mark in Australia and Mim Craig in France.

Then there was TAHEREH, and at this session you can see a brother with a Bible with sticky notes and markers in it. It's good to see folks using paper copies of the Bible. But here you see really the picture of the underground church in Iran and Afghanistan. Encrypted online meetings make it so much easier than in the days of underground churches in e.g. the USSR. But all the same, it is an honour to serve these dear and brave folks:

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For our wisdom in continuing to get food, clothing and firewood to those in such great need
- For Vladimir that he can get baptized
- For wisdom in pastoring all the new converts especially in Iran
- For Ali that he is not beaten any further

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks