

January 2021 Latvia, Greece, Sweden, Iran, Russia, App

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

LATVIA

The pandemic continues out of control here, with the morgues and hospitals often full and the health service largely closed down in order to care for the huge numbers of Covid patients and to begin vaccinations. There is a strict curfew here with army as well as Police on the streets enforcing it. In the daytime, we aren't supposed to meet anyone not in our household. The atmosphere is very oppressive and depressive, although there have been record numbers of downloads of the app in Latvia the last week, both in English and Russian. The few daylight hours at this time of year don't help lift the spirit of heaviness. So we are by all means continuing our preaching and welfare work, but with difficulty. We are taking food to where our folks are and calling them, if they have phones, or sounding the horn to let them know we've done a drop off. Here's a typical excursion- bags of food assembled, with Bibles in them for some, also juice for breaking bread; and then delivering them at pre-arranged spots, sometimes waving to our dear folks through the car window. Many have Covid and the economic situation is really dire. Please pray for us, with the temperature set to go down to -20 C this week according to forecasts. Appreciate your prayers, as living rough in the low temperatures alone are enough to kill elderly folks with breathing problems. Some have already fallen asleep in the Lord, and we look back with gratitude to the happier days when we used to meet at the hall, do Bible study, feed people, and above all, baptize them into the truly saving Name of the Lord Jesus. "Blessed are they that die in the Lord". Now we see it was all worth it. Joy comes, in the morning. Oh that it were come.



GREECE

Another contact from the Farsi "*Bible Companion*" app, ELAHE, was baptized in Greece, with Cindy able to be present and also brothers from USA and Canada.

We did it on Zoom, and the video is at <https://youtu.be/MdD2le5k5oA>

It is in Farsi and English, and hopefully will be useful encouragement for Iranians and Afghanis worldwide to see that being baptized online with live translation and fellowship in their language is an absolute possibility, and is being widely done. Do share it around. And let us know if you'd like to be present at these online baptisms. We tend to use WhatsApp, as Zoom is banned in Iran and WhatsApp in any case is perceived as more secure.



RUSSIA

After many months of daily usage of the app [Russian version], ELENA applied for baptism. She lives alone in isolation in central Russia. It was good to have Mark and Grace present from Australia and newly baptized sister Mina from Bosnia. We watched her baptize herself, after solemnly stating that her baptism was a pledge of a good conscience before her God. Again we rejoice at how the Lord is seeking out His sheep.



SWEDEN

PARVIN was baptized online after a good confession of faith. She explained how she first really heard of Jesus when she was in a bomb shelter 40 years ago in the Iran-Iraq war. They were all scared and thinking about God and someone in the shelter was a Christian and told them about Jesus. It was then, she explained, that she first felt the inadequacy of Islam and decided to try to find the Truth. From that day she has been seeking Him. Now in Sweden, she has had the freedom to research more and gave another very emotional but clearly totally genuine witness to her faith in Him and her love for Him.

IRAN

We had a special day when we baptized four new sisters in Iran, with our new sister Parvin from Sweden also present [top right]. The sincerity of these Iranian women is so impressive. Craig and Miriam in France and Mark Hawkins in Australia are running a weekly breaking of bread on WhatsApp for the Farsi speaking sisters in Iran and Afghanistan who speak some English. Let us know if you know any other sisters who'd benefit from joining in. Zoom is banned in Iran so the many Zoom meetings aren't accessible by our sisters in Iran.



APP

Just a summary. The app was launched in English on October 4, 2019, on Android and iOS. It was launched in March-April 2020 only on Android in Russian, Spanish, French and Farsi. At the close of 2020, there have been a total of 841,284 downloads across all languages and platforms.

We can only thank God. From November 2019 to end December 2020 there have been at least 260 baptisms directly from the app. And the tempo is increasing, averaging around one every two days at present. A huge amount of pastoral support has been given to many isolated new converts, as well as more mature ones now isolated by the pandemic. That dimension of the work cannot really be quantified but is perhaps the most significant. All clearly His work. Thank you all who have donated and shared the app around. Brother Tim Anderson keeps advertising the app website www.freebible.info on the signboard outside his business, and so many keep distributing calling cards and tapping the share button. Thank you all, your labour is not in vain:



PRAYER POINTS

- For wisdom and opportunities to continue feeding in Latvia
- For the onset of Winter in Eastern Europe, with temperatures predicted to drop to -20 C in Latvia later this month GW
- For those recently baptized
- Thanksgiving for the unprecedented spread of God's word through the Bible Companion app

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks