

July 2015 UK, Riga, USA, Ireland

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 13 and there are MP3 files about these chapters at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt13a.mp3> and <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt13b.mp3> . You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://aletheiacollege.net/archives.html> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

CARELINKS UK

We asked for your prayers last week for GLORIA, and referenced her extensive answers to baptismal interview questions at <http://www.carelinks.net/files/revisionanswers.html> . We're happy to tell you that Cindy visited her this week and baptized her. She is in a pretty parlous state as regards her health and is largely bed-bound, living with constant pain and vomiting. But now with the sure hope of the Kingdom before her.

Earlier in the week we baptized FOOZIE, a convert from Islam, originally from Pakistan; she and her British born husband Bill very much accepted us as family and we them. Fozzie has already started sharing the Gospel and our literature with other contacts in the South London area and we are confident that there is developing a good basis for regular Bible meetings in due course. Here are Fozzie and Bill along with Cindy and family:



Just one insertion of an advert for the *NEV Bibles* last week in a national newspaper has produced around 1000 replies. A group of 11 adults and 3 children assembled at the Chelmsford meeting room and spent a very happy and spiritual day writing envelopes and packing the Bibles for just over 700 of the requests. It was wonderful to see such widespread interest; and the names and surnames would indicate the response was largely from local Anglo-Saxon folks, whom we might consider the least interested sector of British society. But not necessarily so. 1000 replies from one insertion is very encouraging, especially as people have to fill out the form and go to the trouble of mailing it to us. There's nothing like all practically working together with hymns and songs in the background, talking with each other about spiritual things as we stuff envelopes with Bibles, and praying together for blessing on the recipients. Many thanks to Chelmsford and to Denis & Jackie for arranging the logistics of all this so very well. That same day witnessed the baptism of Gloria, who 3 years ago had seen the same advertisement, and only now come to baptism. We believe the word will not return void. Here are some photos of our happy day in the Lord's service:



CARELINKS USA

A while ago we reported the baptism of a truck driver in the USA, Robert. Our brother has devoted himself to using our online material and sharing it with others. We're delighted to report the baptism of his wife GABBY and also his fellow truck driver RYAN in a river in Missouri. We're also happy to tell you of the baptism of TERI who came to us from the internet.

You can see the photo brother Robert sent us of the baptisms of Gabby and Ryan:



RIGA

God willing, we intend to provide hot food and Bible teaching most days of the week to our poor brethren and contacts in Riga, Latvia, as in previous years. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve hands on in actually helping genuinely needy people, and thereby backing up the fruitful preaching of the Gospel here. We really do need volunteers and also donations towards the costs... do pray for us and respond as you can

IRELAND

We reported a couple of years ago the baptism of Ted, a former Orthodox Jew, in Ireland. The recent report of activity in the Orthodox Jewish area of Antwerp, Belgium coincided with a pastoral visit to Ted by brother Steve. Steve reports:

" Recently in the Carelinks Newsletter you may have read the section about the Orthodox Jews living near the railway station near Antwerp Belgium. Many Jews are working in the diamond and gold business, buying, preparing and selling the precious materials. Antwerp has long been associated with the trade in valuable metals and stones.

Although they look and long for their Messiah, they have consistently failed to recognise Jesus of Nazareth and it is not easy to expect an Orthodox Jew to abandon his religion, his culture and his great sense of belonging to an extended family to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Most Messianic Jews have come from the Reform Jews.

Imagine our surprise when 2 years ago, Ted a Polish Jew living in Ireland asked to be baptised. One can hardly imagine a more enthusiastic advocate of the gospel of grace as brought to mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet his upbringing as an Ultra-Orthodox Jew was intended to turn him into a rabbi, steeped in the traditions of the elders and an advocate of the Talmud.

Ted has relatives who live and work in Antwerp and 15 years ago you might have photographed him there with his hat, hair-style and Jewish clothing. He identifies his background very closely with those photos.

He explains that there are three basic reasons why Jews find it difficult to accept Jesus as Messiah (Yashua Hamashiach.)

The first is simply ignorance. The New Testament is not in the bookshops and the gospel story is not known. To the extent that it is known, the truth is denied. Jesus is not mentioned in conversation except as a curse.

Secondly, historically Christians have been the worst persecutors of the Jews, accusing them of killing the Messiah. Ted says he is periodically confronted by an anti-Semitic, saying he killed Jesus. This sentiment is still alive in many countries which have a long association with Christianity.

Thirdly, those who investigate Jesus more closely find the concept of the trinity utterly repugnant. Of course, our teaching is more acceptable on that point- but the obstacle needs to be overcome because when they hear "Christian" they will think "Trinitarian."

Why then preach to them and how?

Well the first point is obvious, because Jesus is our Saviour as well as theirs and although it may seem odd-it is we, the branches grafted into the olive who are trying to graft in the natural branches back into their own root.

And how? There is a deep suspicion of Gentiles who support Israel so our preaching needs to be based on something they are interested in. We know we want them to identify Jesus as Messiah - Yashua Hamashiach, but Ted suggests that a subject more likely to take the attention of an Orthodox Jew is the subject of life after death.

There are only vague concepts of the nature of life after death amongst Jews, Ted tells me. Immortal souls are commonly accepted and even reincarnation!! "It is thought that if you haven't been a success in life and made a lot of money that you are returned to life to have a further chance!" says Ted. "There is a fundamental lack of understanding of the teaching of the Torah on this subject." Actually when you look through the Jewish scriptures you soon realise that there is very little specifically dealing with the subject of personal resurrection and life after death. It makes this subject an interesting one to capture their interest.

Turning to the identification of the Messiah, Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 with their obvious description of the crucifixion are obvious texts and are good starting points.

But back to Ted. He says that his curiosity arose as no-one knew about Jesus and his name was only spoken in his community as a curse. So eventually he obtained copies of the gospels and read the facts. What he saw transformed him. This Jesus was far away from the impression he had grown up with.

The cost of following Jesus has been huge. His interest in Christianity had been viewed by his family as suspicious - but his baptism was fatal. His family and community have declared him dead. His wealthy aunt has rewritten her will to exclude him. There is no contact nor hope of reconciliation unless he categorically denies faith in Jesus. "And how can I do that? Once you know the truth about Jesus you cannot deny what you know. I could not do it."

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, - says Jesus, -but the sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners."

Jesus called his nation 2000 years ago, and there are some who are listening.
If you'd like to write to Ted, then let Steve Gretton know: steve.gretton@gmail.com "

PRAYER POINTS:

- For volunteers for the feeding scheme in Riga
- For the newly baptized
- For the hundreds of people in the UK receiving their NEV Bibles this week

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks