

July 2016 USA, UK, Russia, Australia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 11 there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt11.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>

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

RUSSIA

The brotherhood here has suffered the hardest blow since our work began here in the late 1980s. We recently asked for your prayers regarding new religious laws which were being considered, and we have to tell you that they now have been passed into law. They are draconian, allowing no religious activity of any kind outside the *Russian Orthodox Church* or the few registered religious groups. **All Christian literature is to be registered and approved.** To quote: "The new law will require any sharing of the Christian faith - even a casual conversation - to have prior authorisation from the state. This includes something as basic as an emailed invitation for a friend to attend church. Even in a private home, worship and prayer will only be allowed if there are no unbelievers present. Churches will also be held accountable for the activities of their members. So if, for example, a church member mentions their faith in conversation with a work colleague, not only the church member but also the church itself could be punished, with individuals facing fines of up to 50,000 roubles (UK 580; USD 770; Euro 700). There are also restrictions on the extent to which churches can have contact with foreigners; for example, any non-Russian citizen attending a church service would be required to have a work visa or face a fine and expulsion from Russia" - taken from <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Putin-Signs-Draconian-Anti-Christian-Provisions-into-Law>

Basically, one can only be a practicing, preaching Christian if they attend a state church like the Orthodox Church. We have produced more details about the legislation as a footnote to this report. The consequences for our brethren in Russia and our work there are going to be severe. It is really a return to the underground church situation in which we first began our work in Russia. *Carelinks* began as a prayer request system and we are still very much that- so please wherever you are, pray for this situation...

The weekend the new legislation was being passed, two middle aged married couples were baptized in the Volga River, ALEXEI & NATALYA, and MIKHAIL & VALENTINA. They had first received the *NEV Bible* in Russian, then *Bible Basics*, and had passed through JWs and various groups before becoming convicted of the real Christ and desiring baptism into Him. Their path is not going to be easy.



UK

We're pleased to tell you of the baptism of ALI this week. His cousin was baptized at our house

church in Croydon and he had shared the good news. Our brother is from Kurdistan originally; now he lives in an inner city area where most of the schoolgirls are Muslims and wear head coverings, flooding the streets with their witness for their faith as they come out of school; and former churches are now nearly all converted to mosques, with anti-Israel sentiment and graffiti in evidence. Whatever the implications of Brexit, the UK and Europe are already changed for ever, and those changes have come so quickly that they clearly have portents of the last days and the Lord's early return. So here's our brother after his baptism with the blue cover of *Bible Basics* for Muslims visible; we're happy to provide copies of this to any wanting help in their witness to Muslims.



We're planning a campaign in the community centre at the Phipps Bridge estate in Mitcham, South London on the afternoon of Tuesday 26 July God willing. It will feature *NEV Bibles* for free, for those who come to the talk [although they can request them online too]. The lecture will be advertised by distributing 5000 leaflets in the immediate neighbourhood. So if you are free on Saturday 23 July or other days before or after... do come along and work with us distributing the fliers. This estate is one of the most crime ridden in London- but there are now CCTV cameras everywhere and we don't consider we're at any undue risk in the daytime. Unemployment is high, and the apartment blocks are situated around the community centre- so there are a few thousand people in walking distance of the meeting place, many with time on their hands. All manner of Muslim, Christian and other groups meet there. There are a lot of people in serious need of the good news there. Other such community centres turned us down as they de facto don't allow Christian groups to use them. So this was the one we were led to. Please pray for our work. And we are open to donations towards the cost, of hall hire, leaflet printing etc. But do come along if you can... we could likely find a bed for you overnight in Croydon if you want to come from out of town. Let us know if you'd like to see the leaflet we're printing for it.

USA

We're delighted to tell you of the baptism of MILES after getting an *NEV Bible* and completing the *Bible Basics* course including the 11 hour video seminar offered at www.biblebasicsonline.com. He really grasps the spirit of the truth as well as the theology thereof and correspondence and contact with him has been such a joy. It's so thrilling to see a secular man very wise in the wisdom of this world come to grasp the simple truths of the Lord Jesus and have the courage and humility to accept them. Here are just a few snippets from correspondence with him, and his photo... he is a particularly expressive writer and we see here the thrill of a man coming to the true light of Christ:



Yes I requested a copy of the *NEV*. I will be glad to purchase one since shipping to the USA is costly... I am new to your Movement and appreciate the openness you presented in the YouTube Video ... I am continuing my reading and study. I was raised a Presbyterian but always had question about the Trinity and the "fully man/fully God" theological debates. I look forward to

more study- thanks so much.... Both the *NEV Bible* and *Bible Basics* arrived yesterday. Thank everyone so much plus I found a copy of *The Real Christ* also arrived yesterday... just had to write to tell you how wonderful and inspiring your *YouTube* videos on *Bible Basics* are. In the last three days I have watched the entire series. It's not that I wanted to watch the whole series together or set that as a goal, but I couldn't stop.

I tried to do other things (watch a movie, read a novel) but I wanted to know more, hear more... My wife is away for a few days so I had no commitments, doctors appointments etc. It was like a retreat in a way, a spiritual retreat.... Last night at 2 in the morning I finished the last lesson of the series. If you had been close by I would have knocked on your door and asked you to baptize me right then and there- fill the bathtub, do whatever you had to do, but I want to be a part of Christ's coming kingdom. I didn't know what to do so I prayed.... I am so excited by this new way of seeing the Bible, of seeing Jesus and God newly, freshly and hopefully.... I have thought intensely about my Baptism for the last few days... I'll continue asking for guidance. I do so want to be a part of His Kingdom on earth. I so much want to feel Jesus's love again. I have been so discouraged and sad that I have not attended any other church since my departure from Orthodoxy. My prayers have been silent and I must admit, few.

Your lectures were a breath of fresh air- I feel such new possibilities in my life... I just wanted to thank you so much for that- for that rebirth of wonder.... I realized that my Baptism into the Orthodox church was just that. I was Baptized into the Church. I turned over the "power" of that Baptism to the priest. ... I let him take responsibility for an act that was done to me rather than done by me. I would very much like to ask Christ myself to forgive my sins and accept me into The Kingdom of God. I want to "put on" Christ myself... Though I have not studied the Bible seriously in years, I did take courses in Old and New Testament (Presbyterian college freshman) ...

The ideas and explanations you present have revitalized an old love. The entire relationship to Jesus changes when you take back the shimmering direct relationship to Christ's love. I haven't used that word about my relationship to God and his Son in a long time..."I've been prayin' and pondering" is how my grandmother would express it, but I have been thinking a great deal about Baptism... I'm afraid I won't feel an epiphany. If you really realize the magnitude of what you're doing within the simple frame God has given us, how can you feel that? I'm a beggar from where I stand- like Paul, I think you said not able to do what I know I should do to be a better mirror to Jesus. My mirror is old and dusty, I reflect a poor image at times- impatient, unkind, thoughtless, selfish. I really feel only able to even approach this through whatever wattage of Grace I can feel.. The great sense of remorse at all you have done self centeredly, outside the favor of God, Baptism deals with such a vastness, it's hard to conceive. I can only see the edge of that vast love. But I want to walk into the sea and baptize myself in Christ... When I'm not sure...

I turn 70 on July 5th and thought that would be a good day- as if any day isn't. But I do have questions, not so much about understanding the frame of the belief system you have presented but in my desire to move quickly. Why am I moving so fast? But yet there is the Ethiopian (The guy traveling and coming to an oasis right?).... Jesus and I are having some long and truthful conversations of late...

Thank you again for your encouragement. I'm kind of blown away by the sweep of Christ into my life again... I have been remiss in not expressing how grateful I am for your lectures and videos and connecting the dots. Really they opened something in me again, some fracture in the heart that made me call out again, for Jesus... inspired me to seek to be a part of The Kingdom of God. How can I ever thank you for that? All I can do is thank you from the depths of wordlessness.... I am only concerned I may seek Jesus's love more surely than I know how to love Him. I want to love him fully and I don't know how. I can only hope that Grace will show me how to love and

trust Him beyond my thoughts. I want His heart to beat in my chest.... I finished watching the videos on The Sermon on The Mount, and a couple on Baptism. I'm so excited- I feel like I'm getting married. I told my wife Diane of my morning plans for my birthday (She is a non practicing Jew). She asked to come with me...

[THEN AFTER THE BAPTISM...]

Just a quick note-

I FEEL WONDERFUL! Last night all I could do was ponder the idea of Grace. How God invites, through Jesus, everyone back to Him. How it really is a calling back to love. I must admit I can only ponder this great open invitation to accept God's love. For a good deal of my life I thought God didn't like me. I know that sounds juvenile but it is true. No matter what I did I seemed to feel His indifference. Yesterday I realized I had misjudged His silence. It kind of seems like I have set myself up all my life for yesterdays simple "Yes." Yes, I accept you as my Lord. Yes I accept His gift of Grace, Yes, I am Baptized, and Yes I will try and follow you with all my heart, counting on Christ's love and Grace. YES YES YES! Sometimes I am so ignorant and blind I have to be hit over the head to pay attention....

AUSTRALIA

We're planning a campaign in immigrant areas of Sydney in October, God willing. Plans have yet to be finalized but let us or Br John Thatcher know if you'd like to participate. There will also be a **Carelinks Conference in October in Sydney**. Meanwhile we can all take inspiration from brother Colin Green offering our *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* at his high class chocolate and coffee shop in Sydney- again, let us know if you'd like supplies for similar outreach. We've had hundreds of replies from just one advert in The Senior newspaper, they were all sent Bibles, and recently we held a session of letter writing to those contacts to seek to stimulate their interest; in the photo you can see John, Steve, Peter and Grant at work at this one evening; doing this in Russia now would lead to imprisonment and heavy fines. So we must use all our opportunities whilst we can.



PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For the brotherhood in Russia
- For the campaigns planned in South London and Sydney

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW LEGISLATION IN RUSSIA

Taken from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2016/june/no-evangelizing-outside-of-church-russia-proposes.html>

"Protestants and religious minorities small enough to gather in homes fear they will be most affected. Last month, the local police officer came to a home where a group of Pentecostals meet each Sunday," Konstantin Bendas, deputy bishop of the Pentecostal Union, told Forum 18. "With a contented expression he told them: "Now they're adopting the law I'll drive you all out of here." I reckon we should now fear such zealous enforcement.... Christians in Russia won't be

allowed to email their friends an invitation to church or to evangelize in their own homes ... place broad limitations on missionary work, including preaching, teaching, and engaging in any activity designed to recruit people into a religious group.

To share their faith, citizens must secure a government permit through a registered religious organization, and they cannot evangelize anywhere besides churches and other religious sites. The restrictions even apply to activity in private residences and online... "many believers will find themselves in exile and subjected to reprisals because of our faith," wrote Oleg Goncharov, spokesman for the Seventh-day Adventists' Euro-Asia division ... the law appears to target religious groups outside the Russian Orthodox church. Because it defines missionary activities as religious practices to spread a faith beyond its members, if that is interpreted as the Moscow Patriarchate is likely to, it will mean the Orthodox Church can go after ethnic Russians but that no other church will be allowed to,"

..."The Russian Orthodox church is part of a bulwark of Russian nationalism stirred up by Vladimir Putin," David Aikman, history professor and foreign affairs expert, told CT. "Everything that undermines that action is a real threat, whether that" evangelical Protestant missionaries or anything else." Sergei Ryakhovsky, head of the Protestant Churches of Russia, and several other evangelical leaders called the law a violation of religious freedom and personal conscience in a letter to Putin ... The letter reads, in part:

The obligation on every believer to have a special permit to spread his or her beliefs, as well as hand out religious literature and material outside of places of worship and used structures is not only absurd and offensive, but also creates the basis for mass persecution of believers for violating these provisions. Soviet history shows us how many people of different faiths have been persecuted for spreading the Word of God. This law brings us back to a shameful past."

The so-called Big Brother laws also introduce widespread surveillance of online activity... Foreign visitors who violate the law face deportation. Russia has already moved to contain foreign missionaries. The 'foreign agent' law, adopted in 2012, requires groups from abroad to file detailed paperwork and be subject to government audits and raids. Since then, the NGO sector has shrunk by a third, according to government statistics. "In Moscow, we shared an office with 24 organizations. Not a single foreign expatriate mission is there now," Rakhuba previously told CT. "They could not re-register. Missionaries could not return to Russia because they could not renew their visas. It is next to impossible to get registration as a foreign organization today."