

March 2012 Cuba, Germany

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Luke 2 and there's an MP3 on this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk2.mp3>

CUBA

We're pleased to report the first baptisms by our community in Cuba- a family of three, the father ALEX, wife MABEL and 17 year old son GABRIEL. Communication is a major problem- internet is only allowed in the higher range tourist hotels and most Cubans aren't online. Cell phones are available only for certain people and most Cubans don't have one. So all communication with our brethren has to be by snail mail, which is very slow, about a month each way- if it ever gets through [sometimes it doesn't at all].

Alex is an energetic man with a real heart for God. Having committed himself to Christ, he began reading the Bible, and has a great familiarity with the text. They have six books in their humble home- three of which are Bibles and the others *Bible Basics* and *Introducing Bible Basics*. As he read the Bible, Alex realized he must be baptized, but the churches in Cuba seem to treat baptism as an entry rite into their denomination. They demanded he tithe to them if he were baptized, which Alex declined to do as he felt it wasn't required by the Bible. They demanded he accept all their doctrines, which Alex couldn't do- as he found the Trinity to be lacking in Biblical support. Alex heard of a man in another church who had baptized himself and then his family. Alex located him in the hope he would baptize him- but the man had been disfellowshipped from the church for doing this, and had now repented of baptizing people [!!] and returned to the church, promising never to baptize anyone again. Alex asked God to lead him to someone to baptize him and to explain the Gospel more fully.

Alex had a brief opportunity to get online and figure out how to use the internet- and he used it for 30 minutes. He valued every minute of it, and spent those valuable minutes surfing the net looking for information about the Trinity and Biblical alternatives to it. By grace he was lead to carelinks.net and then biblebasicsonline.com and filled out the form requesting the literature. We get hundreds of requests each day and send a standard email to all enquirers asking them to confirm their interest. Those who don't insert email addresses don't get anything sent to them. But having a request from Cuba caught our eye in the inbox. We decided to send this person a *Bible Basics* anyway. Our mission is to spread the Gospel to new areas where the Truth hasn't been widely distributed, and so we thought that in any case it'd be good to send a book there. Alex received the book and devoured it, covering it with notes, and returned the answers by snail mail, asking to be baptized. And so began a lengthy period of snail mail correspondence. Satisfied that this man appeared to have a good grasp of the Truth, we arranged to visit him. But then he went dead- no response to our letters. Was it worth such a huge journey when the man may be dead, have lost interest, moved away? Re-reading his answers and his previous letters, he seemed so sincere. God put on our heart to make this trip, and we sent letters asking him to meet us off our flight at the airport in Havana. A lot of prayers were offered by the Carelinks team about this trip. Duncan arrived in Havana- but nobody was waiting as requested. He got a taxi to take him to Alex's address, about 100 miles from Havana. It was only his postal address, he didn't live there, but a boy was dispatched by bicycle to find Alex. Alex had received no letters from us for a long time. He thought we'd given up with him, another church who didn't really care about the individual. It was an emotional and prayerful meeting on the veranda of a very old Spanish colonial period home in small town Cuba. He couldn't believe that we valued one person enough to do this.

Ordinary Cubans aren't allowed to have foreigners staying in their homes even for one night, and there was no hotel in the small town. Which meant more taxi journeys to another city to find a hotel. Alex took the next day off work and we spent the day in careful discussion of the Bible. This is really a Bible loving family, and they really were 101% in agreement with our understanding of the Gospel. They had no bath tub and so we chartered another taxi- a huge 1956 Ford [Cuba has the oldest preserved American cars in active use anywhere in the world]. The bemused driver took us to a river some distance away, and watched as this small family was baptized.



Alex has a group of about 15 young people who attend his home weekly for Bible study, sitting on the floor as he teaches them from *Bible Basics*. We really have the nucleus of an ecclesia here. Who is going to come forward to go and pastor this group and assist with baptizing them? We invite the CBMA and all who love the Truth to come forward in assisting with fellowshiping our new brothers and sister and in helping with the work in Cuba. It's a lovely and unusual place, not without its challenges, but with plenty of resort areas if that's interesting for anyone. Alex speaks excellent English but of course it's generally a Spanish speaking area. But only knowing English is fine.

Alex says that books and packages get through to him better and more reliably than letters. He is very eager to study the original Hebrew and Greek of the Bible. We wonder if anyone has a *Strong's* or *Young's* concordance, or an interlinear diatome version, or teach yourself Biblical Greek or Hebrew books [written in English or Spanish], or indeed any such literature, which they'd be prepared to post to our brother? We realize postage is increasingly expensive. Do contact us if so. We're also looking to reprint *Bible Basics* in Spanish and will appreciate any donations towards that.

So we really thank God for His faithfulness in answering prayer, and His demonstration once again of His eager willingness to work with any sincere effort to bring individuals towards His Kingdom.

GERMANY

Whilst en route to Cuba we made use of a layover in Germany to visit and baptize CYRIACUS, an African immigrant to Europe who has already lived for many years in Spain and Germany. Our new brother had fully completed the *Bible Basics* course and is eager to attend the missionary training program in **Riga** in July, God willing. We discussed together God's providence, how he was able to immigrate to Europe when it was easier to do this [Africans can hardly get visas to enter Europe now let alone immigrate], and in his case, this was his path to find the true Gospel. Our brother lives in Spain but is currently working short term in Germany. Our brother was deeply impressed to learn that God is one not three, and that the hope of the Gospel is the resurrection to eternal life in God's Kingdom on earth, rather than going to Heaven as an immortal soul. It's wonderful how all the doctrines of the Gospel connect so seamlessly with each other and reinforce each other. Here's our brother with a de luxe version of the **NEV**

Bible as his baptism present, with his final answer papers in it:



With love and joy from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks