

March 2016 Latvia, UK, Turkey

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Luke 11 and there's an MP3 about this chapter at www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk11.mp3

you can see archives of Bible talks for every day of the year according to the *Bible Companion* at www.aletheiacollege.net/archives.html

TURKEY

The focus of the news about the migrant crisis is upon the Syrian refugees arriving on the beaches of Greek islands and trapped at the Macedonian border. However there are a few million refugees trapped in Turkey whose fate is less publicized- and these include many of our brethren from Iran and others seeking baptism. Turkey gives such refugees no state support, they aren't allowed to work, and are sent to live in remote areas away from big cities, often to small mountain towns, where xenophobia and general opposition to refugees is rife on all levels. And they are left there for years, literally- the game plan being to make them return home or just go elsewhere. Those fleeing for reasons of religious conversion have little or no support from their families back in Iran or Afghanistan; they have to exist in very primitive conditions. Some of our already baptized brethren have been in this situation for years. Over those years we have been sending them whole boxes of Farsi Bible Basics to distribute and now many are ready for baptism. This week a trip is being made to baptize them, and we ask for your prayers and also for prayers for wisdom as to know how best to assist these dear folks. Regular support of them is going to be astronomically expensive and would create a worrying precedent which might encourage others to seek baptism for the wrong motives. And yet one cannot do nothing when faced with such levels of need. So please pray for our wisdom and please donate as you can. Our PayPal address is tiybible@yahoo.com and you can donate according to the details at the end of this newsletter. Next week God willing we hope to update you.

UK

We've held more meetings to teach our Iranian friends in South London. We're also leasé to tell you of the baptism of OSCAR an 86 year old Ghanaian living in inner London. He may appear another elderly African gentleman walking with a stick, but he has quite the story. When the Gold Coast became independent from the United Kingdom and proclaimed independence as Ghana in 1957, the decision had to be made as to which of the contesting royal families should be accepted as the king of the Ashantis. Our brother's nephew [older than him] was the King, but was deposed. Oscar and others in the royal family fled to the USSR, where he studied for many years with distinction in Moscow and Kiev and pioneered flight simulation training for pilots on the ground. He still speaks Russian. He worked for a while in Canada in this specialism before emigrating from there to the UK. He lived next to the Brixton Unitarian Chapel, and this developed his interest in unitarian Christianity. He simply loves his Bible and laments how the churches have departed from a Biblical approach. He was quite staggered as he found we had been in the same towns and cities of Ghana, Canada and the Soviet Union. We reviewed his life at length, with him showing us photos of his relatives on thrones in the early 1950s, him in Moscow and Kiev training Soviet fighter pilots, and then later in La Salle, Quebec in Canada. He is very much with the Lord and his meeting with us was surely meant to be, although one wonders why the Lord left it to the latter part of his life. He asked for Bibles to distribute to whoever comes to visit him, he so loves the NEV Bible with commentary. And so again we marvel at the Lord's great activity in human life, preparing this man for this meeting with us through his early life in Ghana, his many years in the USSR, and then his later life in the United

Kingdom. Like watching an aeroplane crossing the sky, it all may seem from a distance so slow, but in fact His action is so intense and fast moving. Here is our brother in his flat with his *NEV Bible*:



LATVIA

Kate, Miriam and Sarah have just returned from stint at the Riga Bible Center, here's their report:

Sarah & Kate:

This was our first time at the Riga centre and the first time in Latvia. Upon arrival we were both surprised to see how somber Riga is at this time of year. With grey skies and a biting chill to the air, one quickly appreciates how difficult it must be to be homeless here. We just cannot get used to the somber feeling outside; the dreary ex-soviet buildings surrounding the centre in clear contrast to the events happening inside. Looking in at this project from the outside, it is easy to make the assumption that people ??come for the food??, and this is probably true to a point. But, having seen how riveted they are when Maxim speaks, it is clear that they might come because of the food, but they return because of faith. Maxim's Q&A seems to be rather popular and discussions are very lively! We were both astonished that this happy atmosphere prevails, despite the terrible circumstances that have caused this center to be here in the first place.

Serving the food we have prepared is an incredible experience and we would encourage anyone that has thought about volunteering to do it. Despite language differences, banter is regular and some of the attendee's have even learnt a few words in English, in order to display their gratitude. These things from our time here will stay with us:

1. The impromptu hairdressing session on Sunday and Medina's face when Vladimir was doing his best Nicky Clarke impression (see photos). Vladimir's eyesight has deteriorated, so with the best will in the world it's not easy for him. We soon rescued her and finished the job with (we hope) a little more finesse. Since this she comes to find us for hugs and kisses when she arrives.
2. The gifts of boiled sweets, fruit and flowers that Kate received on ladies day.
3. Two older gentlemen, in their attempt to show gratitude telling us 'I love you' over and over, in English.
4. The extensive clean down everyday, for which we have to do nothing outside of the kitchen because it is completely taken care of by those thankful to be here.



Mim:

It is two years since my last visit to the *Bible Centre* and I have found it very touching to see how the brothers and sisters help each other. For instance, Andre reappears at the front of the

feeding queue about six times as he takes the bowls of food to those that cannot stand for long. His re-appearance at the head of the queue never causes any problems, just a bit of playful banter. After they have eaten, some of them have taken it upon themselves to do the cleaning and busily wash tables, floors, toilets and Hoover the hall - which has been a huge help to us this week. They seem so much more connected with each other and it was great to see many of the familiar faces from my previous visits.

A big thank also goes to those that have worked so hard to make the accommodation at the hall so comfortable - you have done a fantastic job!



God bless
Mim, Kate and Sarah

Please do remember that there are major ongoing heating, electricity and general maintenance costs both here and at the housing project in northern Latvia.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For the continuing work in Riga
- For wisdom in how to respond to the urgent needs of so many refugee brethren and contacts in Turkey
- For the contacts in South London and elsewhere who are studying the Gospel with us

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks