

March 2020 Canada, Latvia, Italy, Russia

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 see the list of exhortations at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm>

We are continuing our online breaking of bread on Facebook on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. GMT, on our *Carelinks Ministries* Facebook page. And there is an **Australian** online breaking of bread on Tuesday evenings Australian time using PalTalk.

RUSSIA

We're pleased to tell you of the self baptism of OLEG in Russia. Five of us were online with him through Skype as he gave a lengthy account of his faith, answered our questions and then immersed himself in his bath tub and we broke bread together afterwards. We recorded his responses, all in Russian, and here are some translated highlights. It's a wonderful story of a secular man coming to the Lord Jesus in spirit and truth:

"I grew up without God at all, I went to the Russian Orthodox church a few times and was not impressed. I never held a Bible in my hand nor had the slightest interest in Christianity. I knew nothing. I finished university, got a job, suffered from depression a bit. I suppose, as all people do. One day I woke up, and it was my birthday. I lay in bed thinking I want to know more about life, where my life is going, and so I thought about God. All I had been taught was evolution and atheism. I had a strong surge of feeling that it was just not logical that everything around us happened by chance. It just couldn't be, that all around us came from chance by random mutation. It just couldn't be, that there is really no God, no designer, no creator in all this. I got out of bed and sat at my computer and started searching the internet. I searched about God, about creationism, about Jesus Christ. I came to a whole world of websites I never knew existed. Some days later I was sitting at my computer continuing my search. You can imagine, I was looking at all kinds of Christian sites. I came to one with Christian music. All I knew of church music was the chants in the Orthodox church, which had seemed so pointless to me. On this site, I heard Christian music. I never really knew this genre of music existed and had certainly never listened to it. They were singing so beautifully, with passion, in my native language of Russian, about Jesus, about God, about His love. I sat at my desk in my flat, and tears were pouring down my face. I thought of all my sins and I was so very sorry for them. But, I want to emphasize, I didn't repent. I had not heard the idea of repentance. I was just thinking what a wretched man I am, a sinner, an unbeliever, with no hope. It was like my spiritual switch had been flicked from "off" to "on".

As I continued my search, I began to look at the Bible. I recall the wonderful moment when I encountered the idea of repentance and forgiveness. I could repent. I could be forgiven. I suppose the religious side of me, the side which is in every man, the desire for religion, for some bigger help, some group, it came over me. I went to a church, a Baptist church. They told me the simple message of Jesus, of the cross, of God's love. And I believed it with all my heart and enthusiastically joined the church. I attended all meetings including extra Bible study with the pastor, I went to home Bible studies. But something wasn't right. I began asking questions. The

Trinity made no sense to me. I had this feeling that the wonderful simple message of Christ crucified on the cross was kind of destroyed by saying Jesus was God. I also thought a lot about my sins which I believed were forgiven. I was being told that these sins were not my fault but that Lucifer had forced me to do them. I started to research about the question of Satan and sin. What the pastor said didn't make sense.

God led me to your video about "*The Real Devil*". I watched this movie several times. It all made sense. I had many questions. So I contacted Duncan and started asking him questions. Especially about Isaiah 14. The answer that it meant the King of Babylon made perfect sense. Duncan put a "PS" at the end of an email once. Saying that actually, the devil wasn't the only issue that Christianity was mistaken about, they were wrong about the Trinity too. I was fascinated by this, because I too had come to that conclusion. So I asked for more information. He sent me the PDF of the book "*The Real Christ*". I read this eagerly and it made perfect sense. I then didn't have contact with Duncan for a while. I continued attending the church meetings and hearing the explanations of the pastor. Which didn't make sense to me. After a long time, Duncan contacted me and suggested I download the *Bible Companion* app. I did. I went through the lessons of "*Bible Basics*" and sent in the answers to the questions at the end of each chapter. I started to see how wrong was the church, even though they were sincere people. I knew if I spoke my mind, I would be thrown out. I also became compelled to be baptized. I didn't know what course of action to take, to be open about my understandings or not, or to just attend the church and have my own views in my heart. I prayed about it. We then had a home group. The pastor asked 'Has anyone had a word from the Lord this week they'd like to discuss?'. I took a deep breath and saw this as the answer to my prayer. So I said, Yes. I said that I had understood Jesus is not God, there is no Trinity, and Satan isn't how they imagine it. By the end of the evening, I was told I was fired from the church and was a heretic and not a Christian. Then, lots of messages and chats with you. And then Duncan introduced me to Maxim and others. And so here I am, going to be baptized. I have another meeting planned with the pastor this week, please pray for me. I know I am now "out" with them, but I'm hoping that what I say may at least sow some seeds of truth in the minds of the pastor and elders and later they might see the truth".

LATVIA, ITALY

With borders closed, brother Maxim has been unable to leave Latvia to return to his employment in **Poland**, nor to his family in **Ukraine**. So please remember that situation in your prayers.

The virus crisis has many dimensions to it. Although everyone has to sacrifice something and take a step down the ladder, those already on the bottom rung are likely to go under. People like the hundreds of thousands of African migrants in Italy, and the elderly Russian population in Riga, Latvia who are living in night shelters with no food apart from what they get from soup kitchens; and all these groups have no or very limited access to health systems. And they are classic 'vulnerable people', with pre existing health problems, elderly and poorly nourished. So, we are doing what we can to provide them with food.

We prepared sandwiches, mandarines, biscuits and coffee for them. As all meetings are either banned or unwise, we didn't let them into the hall. We placed the packages on a small table at the entrance, and they individually came one by one and took their packages. We wished them God's blessings and were cheerful and upbeat to them. The hard part was forcing them to line up around the perimeter of the hall, with a 2 meter distance between them. They then came and took their packages one by one. We were surprised how many came, and all our food went, around 60 packages. We really need to ideally provide them with hot soup but this will require

getting them disposable packaging to keep it in.

Some of the old ones were coughing badly and leaning heavier than usual on their walking sticks. We can only commend them to God's grace and continue to do what we can.

Please do pray for them and for our work, and for wisdom as to how to take it forward in a difficult and challenging environment, with the continual problem of empty supermarket shelves- although that is not to say that there is no food available at all, it is there, if you get to the shops first thing in the morning.

There's a video of the work at <https://youtu.be/h4sBwx78Wtw>

At the end of it, Cindy gives a good summary of how it all went. We're so grateful for the hall and for all your support.

There are wider problems with this crisis especially for our migrant brethren in Italy. They are locked down, have nowhere to work or get food from, are outside the health care system, and many are living on the streets anyway. They are hungry and some are already infected with the virus. We are sending money and will report more next mail, Lord willing.

Please do pray for the situation. And we are open to donations for general usage at this very uncertain time.



Our English church is now only operating online, but we were delighted to baptize two contacts from it, DEEPAK and DIKSHA, students from India (brother and sister) studying at the university. Like many, the current crisis made them turn to the Lord far stronger than previously:



CANADA

Brother Jim Barton has been advertising the *Bible Companion* app across Canada, both English and Russian versions, using Google Ads. He has had around 1100 downloads so far. Response broadly follows population. There have been downloads even from the far north- Yukon and North West Territories. Quebec is relatively low and Alberta relatively high. The Russian app has had a lot of downloads in rural Manitoba. But generally, response follows population.

App users are writing most days requesting hard copy literature. We really urge you to get behind this kind of outreach. Given the current crisis, people are thinking about life and God like they never did before. We need to reach out to them with the Gospel. And there are clearly plenty of interested people there.

PRAYER POINTS

- For wisdom in our feeding work in Riga
- For all the interested people out there who are thinking about God and downloading and

using the app

- For our African brethren in Italy and elsewhere in Europe
- For those recently baptized, especially Oleg as he faces his church elders

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks